BIRDS OF HEREFORDSHIRE

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Yours very truly
Horace Bushnell

NOTES

ON THE

BIRDS OF HEREFORDSHIRE.

CONTRIBUTED BY MEMBERS OF THE WOOLHOPE CLUB.

COLLECTED AND ARRANGED BY

THE LATE

HENRY GRAVES BULL, M.D., ETC.,

Editor of the "Herefordshire Pomona," "The Apple and Pear as Vintage Fruits," etc.

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"Hope on—Hope ever.'

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TO THE MEMBERS

OF THE

WOOLHOPE NATURALISTS' FIELD CLUB

THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

IN MEMORY OF

MANY HAPPY YEARS OF RESEARCH

SPENT TOGETHER

IN THE VARIED FIELDS OF INTEREST

CONNECTED WITH THE

COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE.

Ye birds
That singing up to Heaven-gate ascend,
Bear on your wings and in your notes His praise.

Milton—*Paradise Lost V.*

On every bowgh the briddes herde I synge
With voys of aungel in her armony
That besyed hem her briddes forthe to brynge.

Chaucer—*The Assembly of Foules.*

Hark to Nature's lesson, given
By the blessed birds of heaven;
Every bush and tufted tree
Warbles sweet philosophy;
Mortal fly from doubt and sorrow,
God provideth for the morrow.

Heber.

PREFACE.

THESE "Notes on the Birds of Herefordshire" were originally written for the purpose of being read at the Field Meetings of the Woolhope Club; the Members of the Club most kindly helping, by contributing notes of the appearance of any rare or remarkable birds that had come under their notice. Several of the earlier sections of the book were read in this way; but, by degrees, the scope of the design was much extended, and all our Herefordshire Birds were included, as far as they could be ascertained.

DR. BULL then wished to publish the whole series of "Notes" in a separate volume, and had, in fact, completed and arranged the MS. for that purpose. He hoped by this means to increase the interest felt in our feathered companions, and to lead to greater care and method in observing, naming, and classifying the very numerous species that either inhabit or visit the county.

His sudden illness and death prevented his accomplishing his intention; but his papers were fortunately left by him complete, and he expressed an earnest wish that they should be published as soon as was possible. There have been unavoidable delays in bringing the work through the press; but it is hoped that the many friends who have listened to the papers in the field, or joined in the discussions to which they gave rise, will like to possess this volume, as a remembrance of one who so truly loved everything connected with Nature, Antiquity, and Science.

The "Notes," as the title implies, are not an exhaustive account of the birds mentioned, still less a formal treatise on their structure and classification; but rather, familiar reminiscences of homely

favourites, notices of their every-day habits, and of the superstitions connected with them, with many amusing anecdotes derived from personal observation. Dr. Bull delighted in tracing out the allusions to birds, which may be found in our literature, especially in the poets, and very numerous quotations of this kind will be found in the following pages. Those who best knew the author will most fully understand how thoroughly he enjoyed the task of collecting these allusions.

Another subject of interest to Dr. Bull was the preservation of the various local names of birds in the different parts of the county, which are often very characteristic, as well as amusing; a list, as comprehensive as possible, has therefore been added as an Appendix.

Grateful thanks are due to the many kind friends, who, even while these "Notes" have been passing through the press, have so readily aided in making the work as complete and accurate as possible, and bringing it up to the present date.

Among these, special mention must be made of the Rev. Clement Ley, Mr. Blake, of Ross, Mr. Lloyd, of Kington, and Dr. Bull's old and valued friend, the Rev. Thos. Woodhouse, of Ropley, in Hampshire, who, though no longer in Herefordshire, still retains a strong affection for his native county, and who has devoted much valuable time to the revision of these "Notes." Mr. H. T. Wharton, General Editor of the "Ibis Catalogue," has also rendered valuable aid in the revision of the later sheets as they passed through the press, and the kind assistance thus generously given is most gratefully acknowledged.

The Author's own introduction follows.

INTRODUCTION.

HEREFORDSHIRE still affords a rich field for the study of Ornithology. The whole county forms a pastoral oasis of hill and dale, well-wooded and well-watered, filled with meadows and orchards, in the midst of a wild waste of hills of considerable height and of great extent.

To the south and south-west are the Forest of Dean, the Monmouthshire Hills, and the Black Mountains : to the north-west lie the wide ranges of hills, which beginning in Radnorshire and Breconshire, stretch onwards to the sea : on the north, where the hills within the county are wilder and more desolate, they are contiguous with those of Radnorshire and Shropshire : while the eastern side is bounded by a bleak open country, and the long range of the Malvern Hills.

So late as the reign of Queen Elizabeth there were four Royal Forests in Herefordshire. For the southern district the Forest of Ewyas stretched over the Hatteral Hills to the Black Mountains : in the northern part of the county was the Forest of Deerfold (see Woolhope Transactions, 1869) not far off from the wooded and romantic heights of the High Vinnall, Bringwood Chase and Mocktree, Harley's Mountain and a wide tract of neighbouring hills, mostly clothed with wood. In the centre of the county, the Royal Forests of Aconbury and of Haywood (see Woolhope Transactions, for 1870) united with each other in forming one large tract of woodland, greatly extended across the river Wye by the bleak Woolhope district, reaching almost to the foot of the Ledbury and Malvern Hills.

Many woods remain, which were once included in these forests ;

indeed the Government Agricultural Returns show that about one fifteenth of the whole area of the county is still woodland. Besides this, the county abounds in orchards and parks, small woods and copses; fine hedgerows and single trees are plentiful: game-preserving is carried on very strictly in many places; birds find covert and shelter of all kinds, and their numbers are kept up accordingly. The woods and meadows teem with bird life. Their cheerful voices and songs are to be heard everywhere; and the lover of birds is rejoiced by the great variety of notes he hears, and finds continual interest and pleasure in distinguishing between them.

Water-birds have many favourable haunts here. The Wye, our beautiful river, meanders through the county for many miles, doubling and winding between wooded hills, and joined on its way by the Lugg, which itself receives the Arrow, the Pinsley, and many smaller streams, as well as the Frome. On the north and east the Teme skirts the county for many miles, and on the south-west the Monnow, both receiving many tributaries that pass through solitary valleys and wind among hills. These streams attract aquatic birds at all times; and especially in hard winters, when the smaller streams remain open and unfrozen, many Water-fowl flock in to these favoured nooks. Very often, even sea-birds, driven inland in hard weather, or during severe storms, visit our rivers and ponds; and thus the number and variety of our feathered visitors are very largely increased.

Modern improvements, such as the draining of marshes, as at Shobdon and Berrington, have driven away some of our rarer kinds: and the gamekeeper is still very destructive to all the larger and more interesting sorts, such as the Hawk, the Owl, the Raven, the Heron, and such other rare visitants as are of sufficient size to attract his attention. It is a happy thing, however, that large landed proprietors are much more merciful than of old. They encourage the presence of their interesting bird visitors, and are training a more intelligent and observant race of gamekeepers. Surely the loss of a few chickens, or even Partridges and

Pheasants, would be abundantly compensated by the pleasure of watching the graceful soaring flight of the more noble birds of prey. The fox has long been spared: why should not these birds be allowed equal immunity? Indeed, there seems to be some faint hope on the horizon of humanity, that as the test of a good gamekeeper is said to be the abundance of hares he can produce, the good keeper of the future will be known by the abundance of rare and interesting birds he can encourage. Every true lover of birds must devoutly wish that it may be so.

No birds that haunt my valley free,
To slaughter I condemn;
Taught by the Power that pities me,
I learn to pity them.

The preservation of our wild birds has, happily, been very greatly promoted by some recent Acts of Parliament. The Gun License Act of 1870 (33 and 34 Vic., chap. 57), which imposed a duty of ten shillings on every one carrying a gun, has acted most beneficially for the protection of the smaller birds, whose habits and songs add so much pleasure and interest to country life; and the Wild Birds' Protection Acts, passed in 1872 (35 and 36 Vic., chap. 78), and also in 1880 (43 and 44 Vic., chap. 35), have also rendered great service.

The long-continued severe weather of the winter of 1880-1 following, as it did, the sharp frost of 1879-80, proved very destructive to bird life; and great numbers were picked up dead in all directions. It was found also in the summer of 1881, that it had been very fatal to our summer visitors, not only to the Warblers, and more delicate birds, but also to the Swifts, Swallows and Martins, whose migratory habits might have been expected to have enabled them to get beyond its influence. The scarcity of birds in our woods and fields in 1881 was very marked; but, happily, the subsequent mild winters, and the beneficial operation of the Acts of Parliament mentioned above, have already done much to repair the loss.

The same severe winter froze up the little pools, and brought great quantities of Water-fowl to the more open waters of the Wye

and Lugg, where there was greater freedom from ice. Numbers of Ducks, Wigeon, Teal, and Geese appeared on the Wye, where they are now less disturbed than they were in former days, before the railway traffic had superseded the barges.

It remains to notice the papers, etc., that have already appeared upon the Birds of Herefordshire. In the year 1851 a very well-written, and interesting little book, was published by a Herefordshire Naturalist. It is entitled "The Songs of the Birds; or, Analogies of Animal and Spiritual Life," by the Rev. W. E. Evans, M.A., who afterwards became one of the Canons Residentiary of Hereford Cathedral. Mr. Evans lived at Burton Court, in the centre of the county, when the work was published. He was a close observer of nature, and since his work has been long out of print, many quotations will be given from it, in prose and verse, for both are equally good, and founded on local observations in Herefordshire. Quotations from poetry will be very freely given in this work,—feathers to float more pleasantly the dry carcase of scientific names.

Several interesting papers, with local lists of Herefordshire Birds, have already been published in the Transactions of the Woolhope Club; viz., "On the Animals and Birds of Herefordshire," by Mr. R. M. Lingwood (Trans., No. 4, 1862, pp. 32-6); "On the Flight of Birds," by Mr. James Rankin, M.A., M.P. (Trans., 1868, pp. 48-59); "On the Rare Birds of Herefordshire," by Mr. Arthur Armitage and the Rev. Clement Ley (Trans., 1869, pp. 71-7); "On the Rare Birds of Herefordshire and Radnorshire," by Mr. James W. Lloyd (Trans., 1869, pp. 78-80); "List of Birds observed at Bredwardine," by the Rev. Robert Blight (Trans., 1869, pp. 158-9); "List of Birds observed at Lingen," by the Rev. C. H. Middleton (Trans., 1873, p. 88); with many ornithological notices scattered through the volumes. It is proposed now to unite all these observations in one general list for the whole county.

The classification followed in these pages is that proposed by Professor Huxley, and adopted, with some slight modification,

by the British Ornithologists' Union, and published in 1883, as the "Ibis Catalogue of British Birds." This classification is based mainly on the osseous structure of birds, more particularly with regard to the palate bones, as being the part the least modified by the diverse conditions of bird life.

Yarrell's "History of British Birds" must always be regarded an indispensable book for all lovers of Ornithology. The first edition was published in 1837-43, and the last, the fourth, edited by Professor Alfred Newton and Mr. Howard Saunders, was commenced in 1871 and finished in 1885. This admirable work has been taken as the basis of the "Notes on the Birds of Herefordshire," and to it the reader is referred for figures and descriptions of the Birds, and for the full account of them and of their habits, to which these "Notes" must be regarded as merely supplementary.

The arrangement and nomenclature of the "Ibis Catalogue" having been adopted in this work, where it is found that the name of a bird in Yarrell differs, it will be put in italics for convenience of reference.

The names between brackets are those species recorded in the "Ibis Catalogue," but not hitherto observed in Herefordshire. They are inserted in the hope of directing the attention of naturalists to the blanks which still remain in our long list, and which further observation may fill up.

Note to page 240.

An interesting notice of the occurrence of the Kittiwake, *Rissa tridactyla*, has at the last moment been received from Mr. Jenner, of Vennwood, but, unfortunately, too late for insertion in the proper place. This beautiful bird was observed on the pool in the front of the house at Vennwood, on December 12th, 1887, and shot by Mr. Jenner. It proved to be a very good specimen in beautiful plumage, and he is having it stuffed for preservation at Vennwood House.

The Birds chant melody on every bush.
SHAKESPEARE.

All Nature's difference keeps all Nature's peace.
POPE.

Whan that Aprille with his schowres swoote
The drought of Marche hath perced to the roote
* * * * *
And smale fowles maken melodie
That slepen al the night with open yhe.
CHAUCER—*Prologue.*

You winged Choristers, that dwell
In woods, and there maintain a quire,
Whose music doth all art excel,
Naught can we emulate, but admire;
You, living galleys of the air,
That through the strongest tempest slide,
And, by your wanton flight, who dare
The fury of the winds divide;
Praise Him, and in this harmony and love,
Let your soft quire contend with that above.
THOS. STANLEY, 1647.

Beautiful birds of lightsome wing,
Bright creatures that come with the voice of spring,
We see you arrayed in the hues of morn,
Yet ye dream not of pride, and ye wist not of scorn.
* * * * * *
Sweet birds, that breathe the spirit of song,
And surround Heaven's gate in melodious throng,
Who rise with the earliest beams of day
Your morning tribute of thanks to pay.

But most of all it wins my admiration,
To view the structure of this little work—
A bird's nest. Mark it well, within, without,
No tool had he that wrought, no knife to cut,
No nail to fix, no bodkin to insert,
No glue to join; his little beak was all:—
And yet how neatly finish'd! what nice hand,
With every implement and means of art,
And twenty years apprenticeship to boot
Could make me such another?
HURDIS—*The Village Curate.*

The heart is hard in nature and unfit
For human fellowship, as being void
Of sympathy, that is not pleased
With sight of animals enjoying life,
Nor feels that happiness augment his own.

COWPER.

What tongue can tell
The mingled melodies, that mount and swell,
And float upon the flowery-scented gale,
'Wakening sweet echoes through the verdant vale!
Yet not the feeblest note of forest bird
E'en by the brink of woodland waters heard,
Nor loudest clarion that salutes the morn,
But has some note of gladness still upborne;
A hymn of gratitude for life and light,
To the clear heavens fresh opening on the sight.

ELLIS.

I heard a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sat reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the wind.

To her fair work did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
So much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

WORDSWORTH.

Birds! birds! ye are beautiful things,
With your earth-treading feet and your cloud-cleaving wings!
Where shall man wander, and where shall he dwell,
Beautiful birds, that ye come not as well?
Ye have nests on the mountain all rugged and stark,
Ye have nests in the forest all tangled and dark;
Ye build and ye brood 'neath the cottagers eaves,
And ye sleep on the sod 'mid the bonnie green leaves;
Ye hide in the heather, ye lurk in the brake,
Ye dive in the sweet flags that shadow the lake;
Ye skim where the stream parts the orchard-deck'd land,
Ye dance where the foam sweeps the desolate strand;
Beautiful birds! ye come thickly around,
When the bud's on the branch, and the snow's on the ground;
Ye come when the richest of roses flush out,
And ye come when the yellow leaf eddies about.

ELIZA COOK.

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ERRATA.

Page 3—line 4—*for* "Linnœus," *read* "Linnæus."
Page 19—line 1—*for* "Sylvinia," *read* "Sylviinæ."
Page 21—line 1—*for* "Nisidora," *read* "Nisoria."
Page 25—line 7—*dele* "Acrocephalus schensbœnus—Yarrell."
Page 25—line 10—*for* "schœnobœnus" *read* "schœnobænus."
Page 30—line 25—*read* "Continental Coal Titmouse."
Page 31—line 21—*for* "fomerly," *read* "formerly."
Page 40—line 22—
Page 41—lines 20 & 22 } *for* "Musicapa," *read* "Muscicapa."
Page 46—line 15—*for* "Trichodroma," *read* "Tichodroma."
Page 60—line 15—*for* "Plectrophanus," *read* "Plectrophanes."
Page 61—line 9—*for* "Sternus," *read* "Sturnus."
Page 95—line 10—*for* "Tridactylus," *read* "tridactylus."
Page 123—line 20—*for* "Aster," *read* "Astur."
Page 128—line 24—*for* "candidans," *read* "candicans."
Page 159—line 13—*for* "Americanus," *read* "americanus."

NOTES ON THE

BIRDS OF HEREFORDSHIRE.

ORDER—PASSERES.
SUB-ORDER—OSCINES.
SECTION—OSCINES DENTIROSTRES.
FAMILY—TURDIDÆ.
SUB-FAMILY—TURDINÆ.
GENUS—TURDUS.

TURDUS VISCIVORUS—MISSEL THRUSH.

MISTLETOE THRUSH—STORM BIRD.

Oh! herald of the Spring!
. . . . . .
'Tis thine, as thro' the copses rude
Some pensive wanderer sighs along,
To soothe him with thy cheerful song,
And tell of hope and fortitude.

C. SMITH.

THIS bold, beautiful bird is very common throughout the county. It is the "Holme Screech," "Storm Screech," or "Storm Cock," of the peasants, from the loudness of its song before rain, or during the intervals of the early spring storms.

For the same reason it is called in Hampshire the "Weather," as being the harbinger of change. But the charge of being harsh

and unmusical often brought against it, as in the following extract from Knapp's "Journal of a Naturalist," is surely unmerited. Loud, bold, and clear its song is, but surely not harsh. Indeed it may be suspected, that some of his most tuneful strains are attributed by mistake to his congener the Song Thrush, because no one gives the Missel Thrush credit for such music.

"The approach of a sleety snow storm, following a deceitful gleam in spring, is always announced to us by the loud untuneful voice of the Missel Thrush, as it takes its stand on some tall tree, like an enchanter calling up the gale."—*Journal of a Naturalist.*

In Wales the Missel Thrush has acquired the name of "Pen-y-llwyn," or master of the coppice." When he takes to a Yew, or Holly tree laden with berries, he will drive off all other birds with noisy, angry vociferations, and returns himself again and again, until he has eaten them all.

He will remain singing for hours together, out-whistling the wind, and heeding not the pelting storm.

> On pinion stout, I fear no harm,
> Though stem and branch around me break ;
> And I sing in the midst of the wildest storm
> That makes the forest shake.
>
> EVANS—*Songs of the Birds.*

Mr. Evans well describes the bitter instinctive enmity between the Mistletoe Thrush and the Jay, "handed down no doubt traditionally from generation to generation." When the Jay approaches the Thrush's nest to steal the eggs or young birds, the Missels attack him at once, "with a fury and courage worthy of the Falcons themselves," and with so much noise and clamour, that it is well, perhaps, that bird language is not fully understood. Mr. Evans gives a curious instance of revenge taken by some Mistletoe Thrushes near Burton Court, who attacked and killed some half-fledged young Jays, sitting on the edge of their nest during the absence of the parent birds.

The food of the Missel Thrush in Spring consists of worms, snails, grubs, and insects, and, as Summer and Autumn come on,

of the berries of Mountain Ash, Yew, Hawthorn, Ivy, Juniper, and Holly.

The berries of the Mistletoe are also a favourite food of the Thrush. Linnœus calls it *viscivorus*, *i.e.* Mistletoe-eating, and Aristotle mentions a name of the same meaning, as given to the bird in his day.

TURDUS MUSICUS—Song Thrush.

THROSTLE.

The varying Thrush commands a tuneful maze.
SAVAGE.—*The Wanderers.*

Sing on sweet Thrush, upon the leafless bough,
Sing on sweet bird, I listen to thy strain.
BURNS.

That's the wise Thrush ; he sings each song twice over
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine ceaseless rapture.
BROWNING.

So far as songs may be imitated by words, certain passages in the Thrush's song may be expressed thus—

Judy, Judy, Judy: Bo-peep, Bo-peep, Bo-peep, Bo-peep: How d'ye do,
How d'ye do!!

The mavis wild with many a note,
Sings drowsy day to rest.
BURNS.

But it is not in the evening only that the Thrush's cheerful and varied song is heard. He greets the earliest dawn, and sometimes seems as if he never took food or rest all day long.

The Song Thrush is very common throughout the county. Great numbers were destroyed by the severe winter of 1880-1, and they are still much less numerous than formerly. It is a bird of quiet, gentle habits, and whose wild and varied song is always welcome.

Scare if ye will his timid wing away,
But, O, let not the leaden viewless shower,
Vollied from flashing tube, arrest his flight,
And fill his tuneful, gasping bill with blood!
GRAHAME.

The Thrush, a spendthrift of his powers
Enrapturing heaven and earth.
MONTGOMERY.

The Thrush is busy in the wood
And carols loud and strong.
WORDSWORTH.

The tall ash tree, to whose topmost twig
A Thrush resorts and annually chants.
WORDSWORTH.

Bid him come, for on his wings
The sunny year he bringeth,
And the heart unlocks its springs
Whereso'er he singeth.
BARRY CORNWALL.

The food of the Song Thrush consists principally of worms, snails, slugs, and insects. The number of snails devoured by thrushes may be judged of from the number of shells to be found near the neighbouring stones, against which the birds have broken them. In addition to this food, they take also Hawthorn, Mountain Ash, and such other berries as they can find.

TURDUS ILIACUS—REDWING.

The Fieldfare grey, and he of ruddy wing,
Hop o'er the field unheeding, easy prey
To him whose heart has adamant enough
To level thunder at their humblest race.
HURDIS—*The favorite Village.*

A common winter visitant, frequenting the orchards in considerable flocks. Its song, which is seldom to be heard here, has obtained for it in Norway, the name of the "Norwegian Nightingale." It has been known to breed in this county. A cottager near Ross, says Mr. W. C. Blake, took a nest of young birds,

supposing them to be Song Thrushes, and reared them up, but when they gained their full plumage they proved to be Redwings. The Redwings are very fond of snails, and are very clever in finding them in the hedge banks, and breaking their shells against the first stone they meet with. It is in this way they are able to find food in frost and snow, and bear severe weather better than most other birds.

"The number of Redwings," says the Rev. Clement Ley, "like that of several other migratory birds, appears to me, after many years' investigation, to depend on the general direction of the winds at the time of the autumn migration, rather than on the temperature of the winter in these islands. When the north-east winds prevail, the number of Redwings is relatively great; when, however, the predominant westerly winds are very persistent, a comparatively small number of Redwings visit this county."

TURDUS PILARIS—Fieldfare.

BLUE-TAIL.

Fieldfare flocks
From distant lands alight, and chirping, fly
From hedge to hedge, avoiding man's approach.
Grahame—*Birds of Scotland.*

The "Blue-tail," as this bird is called in Herefordshire, is a regular winter visitant. It appears in flocks with its cousins, the Redwings.

A single pied variety of the Fieldfare was killed at Lyonshall, and is now in the possession of Mr. J. W. Lloyd, of Kington. The beak, head, and neck are entirely white, the throat and breast streaked with white, and the wing coverts, with the secondary and tertiary feathers, also mottled with white.

The Fieldfare, like the other thrushes, takes worms, slugs, beetles, and other insects as its general food, but as it does not eat the shelled snails, it is not so well able to obtain food as the Redwings during severe frosts, and hence many of them are killed with the cold and want of food.

Not yet the hawthorn bore her berries red,
With which the Fieldfare, wintry guest is fed.
COWPER—*The needless alarm.*

If 'mid the tassels of the leafless ash
A Fieldfare flock alight, for early frosts prepare.
GRAHAME—*British Georgics.*

[TURDUS MIGRATORIUS—American Robin.]
Dover, 1876, alien, probably escaped.

[TURDUS ATRIGULARIS—Black Throated Thrush.]
Sussex, 1868.

[TURDUS VARIUS—White's Thrush.]
Occasional visitor.

[TURDUS SIBIRICUS—Siberian Thrush.]
Surrey, 1860—1.

TURDUS MERULA—BLACKBIRD.

The Ouzel cock so black of hue,
With orange tawny bill.
SHAKESPEARE.

The Woossell neere at hand, that hath a golden bill.
DRAYTON—*Polyolbion.*

The Blackbird and the speckled Thrush,
Good morrow gave from brake and bush.
SCOTT—*Lady of the lake.*

Blackbirds join the shepherds lay
At close of day.
BURNS.

The Blackbird pipers on the Summer tree.
WORDSWORTH—*Two April mornings.*

The Blackbird is as great a favourite as the Thrush, and even better known. It is associated with the Thrush by the poets, and their songs accord well together, the Thrush having the more varied notes, and the Blackbird the richer melody. Scott, most truly tells us that—

Merry it is in the good green wood
When the Mavis and Merle are singing.

It is common everywhere, but not so common in Herefordshire, ordinarily, as the Song-Thrush. It is a restless, active bird, with great vocal power. Heard late in the evening, and in the early morning, its loud clear notes are yet soft and rich, with a pensive and somewhat melancholy expression, more remarkable for quality of tone than for any great variety—

No jealous Thrush, with effort strong,
Rivals as yet my mellow song.
EVANS—*Songs of the Birds.*

The Merle in his noontide bowers
Makes woodland echoes ring.
BURNS—*Queen of Scots.*

So loud the Blackbird sings,
That far and near the valley rings.
WARTON—*Summer.*

The Merle's note
Mellifluous, rich, deep toned, fills all the vale,
And charms the ravish'd ear.
GRAHAME—*Birds of Scotland.*

The Blackbirds strove with emulation sweet,
And echo answer'd from her close retreat.
BLOOMFIELD—*Spring.*

The Blackbird trolls his rich notes far away.
MACKAY—*Mountain Top.*

That latin was no more difficile
Than to a Blackbird 'tis to whistle.
BUTLER—*Hudibras.*

Mr. Evans instances the Blackbird, as an example showing "the consciousness of doing wrong" in birds. "He will take a worm off

the grass with much apparent confidence; but if you see him approaching the strawberry bed, you will then perceive a stealthy timidity about him. He snatches and looks round, devours in haste, retires, and comes again" (p. 132); and, it may be added, if you catch him in the act of stealing, he flies off, uttering loud objurgations, as if he thinks to lessen the crime by the violence of his cries. It should be told, however, that apart from these little fruit robberies, the Blackbird is the gardener's friend, for his principal food through the year consists of worms, slugs, snails, beetles, and other mischievous insects.

Albino varieties of the Blackbird here, as elsewhere, are occasionally met with, but more frequently they are pied, or only partially coloured. At this time there is one with white wings, the Rev. W. Baskerville Mynors reports, which frequents the shrubbery of the vicarage garden, at Llanwarne. For the last two years, Mr. Cresswell has observed one at Morney Cross, Fownhope, with white spots on the wings, which after every time of moulting, he notices spread further over the plumage.

Another curious variety was shot at Marden, by Mr. Griffiths, in the winter of 1886, which is now in the possession of Mr. Daniel Ovens, of Hereford. The head is nearly white, with a white spot on the breast, and a few white feathers in the wing.

The Rev. Clement Ley found a Blackbird's nest on the level ground in a copse at Sugwas, and he has observed the same peculiarity with nearly all the Thrushes.

TURDUS TORQUATUS—Ring Ouzel.

A summer visitant, sparsely distributed throughout the higher uncultivated districts of the county. It breeds in moderate abundance in the dingles of the Hatterill Hills and the Black

Mountains. "At Cwm-yoy, and still more plentifully in the gullies on the opposite side of the valley," says the Rev. Clement Ley. "The Ring Ouzel," says the Rev. C. L. Eagles, "lives, sometimes all the year round, on the slopes of the Black Mountains. I have shot them in winter, and have often seen their nests in summer. They build under a rock or bank overhanging the dingle, and once I found a nest, with four eggs in it, under a large stone."

A Ring Ouzel's nest, with four eggs in it, was brought to a field meeting of the Club at Pandy, on May 15th, 1884, by Mr. J. W. Lloyd, of Kington, who had taken it in the Llanthony Valley. Some pretty plants of oxalis acetosella, in full blossom, grew beside the nest, and were shown with it.

[Genus—MONTICOLA.]

[MONTICOLA SAXATILIS—Rock-Thrush.]

A rare accidental visitor.

[MONTICOLA CYANUS—Blue Rock-Thrush.]

West Meath, 1866.

GENUS—SAXICOLA.

SAXICOLA ŒNANTHE—WHEATEAR.

One of the earliest of our summer visitants to arrive. Early in March it may generally be seen on the open and unenclosed and uncultivated parts of the county. It is moderately plentiful on the hills separating the valleys of the Wye and the Dore; on the slopes of the Black Mountains; and is also to be found on most of the wild hills, in the northern districts of the county.

[Saxicola stapazina—Black Throated Wheatear.]
Bury, Lancashire, 1875.

[Saxicola deserti—Desert Wheatear.]
Clackmannanshire, 1880.

Genus PRATINCOLA.

PRATINCOLA RUBETRA—Whinchat.

[*Saxicola rubetra—Yarrell.*]

Why art thou ever flitting to and fro?
Plunge through these whins, their thorns will let thee know.
Montgomery—*Birds.*

A regular summer migrant. It is to be found scattered throughout the open meadow districts of the county, but more plentifully on the southern side. "This bird," says the Rev. Clement Ley, "has a remarkable predilection for perching on telegraph wires."

PRATINCOLA RUBICOLA—Stonechat.

[*Saxicola rubicola—Yarrell.*]

The restless Stonechat all day long is heard.

This bird is not so common as the Whinchat. He frequents the same localities, and, though not abundant, is yet widely distributed throughout the county.

Genus—RUTICILLA.

RUTICILLA PHŒNICURUS—Redstart, Firetail, or Fire-Brantail.

The "Brantail," or "Fire Brantail," as it is called in Herefordshire, is a regular summer visitant, fond of the orchards surrounding the back buildings of the farmstead, in whose walls its nest is generally to be found. It is widely distributed throughout the county. The male bird, perhaps the most beautiful of all the birds of passage, frequently directs attention to the nest, by his tiresome note of complaint and alarm, when anyone approaches near it. Perched upon some post, or dead branch, it perseveres in one unceasing clamour, until the object of its fear is removed. "How often," moralises Mr. Evans, "would folly and ignorance pass unnoticed, were it not for the noise" (p. 236).

The Redstart is an insect feeder, and the number of grubs and caterpillars they will destroy in a day, when feeding their young, has been calculated at many hundreds.

RUTICILLA TITYS—Black Redstart.

A rare visitant to this county. A freshly killed specimen was brought to a bird-stuffer in Hereford in 1879; and the keeper at Lye Pole, near Aymestrey, killed one in 1878 at Kinsham.

[Genus—Cyanecula.]

[Cyanecula wolfi—White-spotted Bluethroat.]

London, 1845; Isle of Wight and Scarborough, 1876.

[CYANECULA SUECICA—Red-spotted Bluethroat.]
[*Ruticilla suecica—Yarrell.*]
An occasional visitor.

GENUS—ERITHACUS.

ERITHACUS RUBECULA—REDBREAST.

The brisk, bold Robin.
MACKAY.

The Redbreast whistles from a garden croft.
KEATS.

That swells its little breast so full of song,
Singing above me in this mountain ash.
COLERIDGE.

The Ruddock warbles soft.
SPENCER.

And glancing all at once as keenly at her,
As careful Robin's eye the delver's toil.
TENNYSON.

The bold friendly "Robin," to the joy of every household, is abundant throughout the county. It is an universal favourite, always ready, with the least encouragement, to make itself at home. In the garden, it will sit on one shoulder of the spade as the gardener digs the ground, with his foot on the other, or it will even perch on the gardener's boot. He will enter the house or cottage if invited to do so, or will even invite himself, when the snow is on the ground, to feast on the crumbs that fall from the table, as Thomson so happily describes—

Half afraid, he first
Against the window beats; then brisk alights
On the warm hearth; then hopping on the floor
Eyes all the family askance,
And pecks and starts, and wonders where he is,
Till, more familiar grown, the table crumbs
Attract his slender feet.
THOMSON—*The Seasons.*

Familiar warbler, wherefore art thou come
To sing to thee when all besides are dumb,
Pray let your little children drop a crumb.
MONTGOMERY.

This frank confidence in man has endeared him to children, and gained for him and for the Wren, the very first place in popular regard. According to the old ballad, it was the Robin that took pity on the forlorn, forsaken Babes in the Wood.

No burial this pretty pair,
Of any man receives,
The Robin Redbreast piously
Did cover them with leaves.

His very name of Robin, if not taken from some old Fable, was probably given to him as a sort of pet name.

His bold determined spirit will not brook confinement, and he rebels and struggles, even unto death, against the restraint of a cage. In the autumn, the Robin becomes fierce and pugnacious to his own kindred, and every lawn and thicket becomes a battlefield. The unrelenting fury with which they fight, is well illustrated by an incident, given by Mr. Evans, as occurring at Burton Court in 1850:—"Two Robins engaged in a deadly conflict, when at length one killed the other; throughout the day, the little cruel victor returned, time after time, to wreak his unslaked enmity on the body of his adversary, pecking at it, and apparently glorying in his act of blood" (p. 221). It is believed that the old birds frequently drive the young ones to swell the stream of emigrants, then setting steadily towards warmer climates. It has also been said that their duration of life is but three years, from the second year birds killing the older ones.

The evening song of a Redbreast from the top of a small tree, is thought to indicate fine weather on the morrow. Mr. Evans says of its sweet plaintive notes—

And though the frost be keen,
And though the night be long,
I know that spring will come again,
And sing my morning song.
EVANS—*Songs of the Birds.*

Only the solitary Robin sings,
And perch'd aloft with melancholy note,
Chants out the dirge of autumn.
HURDIS.

The Robin pensive autumn cheers
In all her locks of yellow.
BURNS.

Each woodland pipe is mute,
Save when the Redbreast mourns the fading leaf;
Now plaintively in interrupted trills,
He sings the dirge of the departing year,
Lulling the year with all its cares to rest.
GRAHAME.

The autumnal song of the Robin has a peculiar character of plaintive sweetness which has endeared it to the poets. Thus Keble greets it as—

Sweet messenger of calm decay,
Saluting sorrow as you may,
As one still bent to find or make the best;
In thee, and in this quiet mead,
The lesson of sweet peace I read,
Rather in all to be resigned, than blest.
Christian Year—21st Sunday after Trinity.

GENUS—DAULIAS.

DAULIAS LUSCINIA—NIGHTINGALE.

It was formerly considered a good omen to hear the song of the Nightingale before the Cuckoo. Thus Chaucer sings—

It was a common tale
That it were gode to hear the Nightingale,
Mocke rather than the lewde Cuckoo singe.

And when he had once heard the Cuckoo first, he imagines the Nightingale thus addressing him—

Be not thou dismaied,
For thou hast heard the Cuckoo erst than me,
For if I live, it shall amendid be
The next Maie, if I be not afraied.

And Milton also thus addresses the Nightingale—

> Thy liquid notes that close the eye of day,
> First heard before the shallow Cuckoo's bill,
> Portend success in love.

The Nightingale is not at all abundant in Herefordshire, and is almost confined to the southern half of the county. The numbers vary much. "I have known them in certain years," says the Rev. Clement Ley, "so numerous at Sellack, near Ross, as to be positively troublesome, by the nocturnal disturbance they cause. In other seasons, they have been almost entirely absent." An occasional pair take up their quarters on Broomy-hill and on Aylstone-hill, near Hereford, also at Breinton, Sugwas, Rotherwas, and Wormbridge; they are more regularly found at Eastwood, Ashperton-park, the woods of the Woolhope hills, How Caple, Lyndon, &c.—but in ordinary seasons, there seem only to be one or two pairs of birds in any of these localities.

For the volume, quality, and execution of its voice, the Nightingale is unrivalled among birds. Mr. Evans compares its song "to the sweet voice of heavenly comfort, poured forth in the night of sorrow and distress."

> Such as the hour is, such my song,
> Half plaintive and half glad;
> At first with cadence low and long,
> Mournful awhile, and sad;
> Then like a gentle river flowing,
> And gliding on,
> With livelier tone:
> Then deeper, fuller, growing,
> And onward like a torrent borne,
> Telling of hope that waits a shining morn.
>
> EVANS—*Songs of the Birds.*

> The Nightingale she pours
> Her solitary lays,
> Nor asks a witness of her song,
> Nor thirsts for human praise.
>
> COWPER.

> Ten thousand warblers cheer the day, and one
> The live long night.
>
> COWPER—*Task.*

> Hark! the nightingale,
> Queen of all music, to her listening breast
> Speaks, and the woods are still.
>
> CORNWALL.

The sober-suited songstress.
THOMSON.

Soon as the sun forsakes the evening skies,
And, hid in shade, the gloomy forest lies,
The Nightingales their tuneful vigil keep,
And lull her with their gentle strains asleep.
PHILIPS—*Pastorals.*

So sweet, so shrill, so variously she sang
That the grove echoed, and the valleys rang.
DRYDEN.

Loud trills sweet Philomel his tender strain
Charms his fond bride, and wakes his infant train.
*DARWIN.

The Poets, with the one great exception of Coleridge, who protests against the notion, attribute a melancholy strain to the song of the Nightingale. But this is probably due more to the old story of Philomela and Tereus, than to any close observation of the bird's song.

There is a fashion in such things; and it may be suspected, that some poets have known more of what others had said about the Nightingale, than of the bird itself. One sign of this is, that it is almost always assumed that the bird sings by night only; whereas, in favourable weather, it sings all day as well. Perhaps it is then less noticed, amongst the general chorus of the minstrelsy of the woods, than when it is heard alone, when other sounds are hushed. Then it is hailed as the

Sweet bird that shuns the noise of folly
Most musical, most melancholy.
MILTON.

Milton is pre-eminently the poet of the Nightingale, which doubtless he had often heard among the orchards and hedgerows of Horton, where those lines were written.

He introduces it again in that exquisite passage in Paradise Lost.

Now is the pleasant time
The cool, the silent, save where silence yields
To the night-warbling bird, that now awake
Tunes sweetest his love laboured song.

*Darwin was more careful of his Natural History, than of his poetry. It sounds odd to hear Philomela, the metamorphosed Princess of Athens, turned into a *he*.

And again –

Sweet the coming on
Of grateful evening mild, then silent night
With this her solemn bird.

The quaint words of Barnefield, so often attributed to Shakespeare, which the madrigal by Lord Mornington, or the duet of Sir H. R. Bishop, have made so familiar, will serve as an example:—

As it fell upon a day
In the merry month of May,
Sitting in a pleasant shade,
Which a grove of myrtles made
Beasts did leap and birds did sing,
Trees did grow and plants did spring ;
Everything did banish moan
Save the Nightingale alone,
She, poor bird, as all forlorn,
Lean'd her breast against a thorn,
And there sang the dolefullest ditty,
That to hear it was great pity.
Fie, fie, fie, now would she cry,
Tereu, Tereu, by and by
That to hear her so complain,
Scarce I could from tears refrain ;
For her grief so lively shown
Made me think upon my own.

The love-lorn Nightingale
Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well.
MILTON—*Comus.*

No Nightingale her love-lorn tune
More sweetly warbles to the moon.
SCOTT—*Marmion.*

As the wakeful bird
Sings darkling, and in shadiest covert hid
Tunes her nocturnal note.
MILTON—*Paradise Lost.*

Isaac Walton says of it—"The Nightingale breathes such sweet loud musick out of her little instrumental throat that it might make mankind to think that miracles are not ceased" . . . . and "lifted up above earth, to say, Lord, what musick hast Thou provided for the saints in Heaven, when Thou affordest bad men such musick on Earth."

All was still ;
And now the Nightingale her song poured forth
In such a torrent of heartfelt delight,
So fast it flowed, her tongue so voluble,
As if she thought her hearers would be gone
Ere half was told.
ROGERS—*Felnea.*

And sweeter far that melting voice,
Than all which through the day rejoice.
HEMANS.

Oh Nightingale, that on yon bloomy spray
Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still,
Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart doth fill,
While the jolly hours lead on propitious May.
MILTON—*Sonnet.*

Hear how the Nightingales on every spray,
Hail, in wild notes the sweet return of May.
SIR W. JONES.

The Nightingale unseen
To the moon and stars, full bright,
Lonesome chants the hymn of night.
PHILLIPS.

Whose trembling notes steal out between
The clustered leaves, herself unseen.
MOORE.

A strain that might almost arouse the dead,
So loud, so full, so exquisite, so gushing and so long.
ELIZA COOK.

Her supple breast thrills out
Sharp airs, and staggers in a warbling doubt
Of dallying sweetness, hovers o'er her skill,
And folds in waved notes, with a trembling bill
The pliant series of her slippery song;
Then starts she suddenly into a throng
Of short thick sobs . . . . .
. . . . . that there doth lie
Bathing in streams of liquid melody.
CRASHAWE.

The Nightingales tender condoling.
KEATS.

This is her burden soft and clear,
Love is here! love is here!
BARRY CORNWALL—*Night Song.*

All but the wakeful Nightingale;
She all night long her amorous descant sung;
Silence was pleased.
MILTON—*Paradise Lost.*

Mr. Ley has found spotted specimens of the eggs of the Nightingale in Herefordshire, though here as elsewhere the egg is usually of an uniform olive brown colour without any markings.

SUB-FAMILY—SYLVINIA.

GENUS—SYLVIA.

SYLVIA CINEREA—WHITETHROAT.

The sporting Whitethroat on some twig's end borne,
Pour'd hymns to freedom and the rising morn.
BLOOMFIELD—*Spring.*

This bird may be seen creeping through the bushes and brambles, of almost every hedgerow in the county, towards the end of April. It sings merrily, and often on the wing. Few days pass in spring, when its well-known rattling song may not be heard.

Away, away,
With spirits gay,
O'er land and sea we come,
Once more our wearied wing to rest
In that one spot that we love best,
Our long sought home.
EVANS—*Songs of the Birds.*

The Whitethroat is no favourite with gardeners, for, though it is usually an insect feeder, yet in the autumn it brings all its brood to prey upon any fruit it finds in the gardens.

SYLVIA CURRUCA—LESSER WHITETHROAT.

For 'midst the yellow bloom the assembled chats,
Wave high the tremulous song, and with shrill notes,
But clear and pleasant, cheer the extensive heath.
CHARLOTTE SMITH—*The Heath.*

This bird is really very common throughout the county, says Mr. Ley, "as anyone who can distinguish its rattle from the confused loquacious song of the Whitethroat will testify." It is, however, far more shy than its congener, concealing itself in the thick hedges, or low bushes.

[SYLVIA ORPHEA—Orphean Warbler.]
An accidental visitor.

SYLVIA ATRICAPILLA—BLACKCAP.

The Blackcaps in an orchard met,
Praising the berries while they ate.
JEAN INGELOW.

Early in April this regular migrant may be welcomed in all parts of the county, but is nowhere to be found in great numbers—

For many a mile by day and night,
Our little wings with pinions light,
Their weary task have plied.
And now we come, all peril past,
Back to the hazel copse at last,
The well-known stream beside.
EVANS—*Songs of the Birds.*

The Blackcap was a great favourite of White of Selborne, who described it as having "a full, sweet, deep, loud, and wild pipe" of short continuance, but in settled song "he pours forth very sweet but inward melody, and expresses a great variety of soft and gentle modulations, superior perhaps to those of any of our warblers, the Nightingale alone excepted." Its tones, he said, always brought to his mind Shakespeare's lines—

And tune his merry note
Unto the wild bird's throat.
—*As You Like It.*

SYLVIA HORTENSIS—GARDEN WARBLER.

[*Sylvia salicaria—Yarrell.*]

When the elm tree is coming into leaf, a nest of the Garden Warbler may be looked for. It is a not uncommon visitor in the county, and widely scattered over it. As a songster, it ranks only after the Blackcap. It pours forth a continued strain of modulations for the half-hour together.

[Sylvia nisidora—Barred Warbler.]
Cambridge, 1879.

[Genus—Melizophilus.]
[Melizophilus undatus—Dartford Warbler.]
Furze districts of South England.

Genus—REGULUS.

REGULUS CRISTATUS—Golden-crested Wren.

"The Golden-crested Wren has a loving, gentle song, that we should suppose no mate could resist. Soft and sibilous, yet clear and expressive, such as the ear of love delights in."

Evans—*Songs of the Birds.*

This, the smallest of all British birds, is common throughout the county. Its numbers were very greatly diminished by the severe winters of 1879-80 and 1880-1, but they are beginning to increase again since that time, and were happily very abundant in 1884. "Its numbers throughout England during the winter season," says the Rev. Clement Ley, "depend on the prevalence of north-east winds, at the time of its partial autumn migration from Scandinavia, being less abundant when the south-west winds are persistent at this time. During the prevalence of a north-east gale, some of the light-houses in the German Ocean are perfectly battered by these tiny birds." This little bird is a great favourite with all who recognise its soft, gentle note, and its elegant motion. It is very fond of fir plantations, and its voice, "like the sound of a small silver bell," may be heard from the top of some tall fir, and the bird, all life and activity, may soon be seen hanging from spray after spray, searching the crevices for its insect food. It builds its nest there too:—

Our nest hangs high on yon tall tree,
With tiny cords suspended;
And few its narrow door can see,
By clustering leaves defended.

Evans—*Songs of the Birds.*

The food of the Golden-crested Wren consists of caterpillars, insects and their larvæ, with a few seeds and small berries.

REGULUS IGNICAPILLUS—Fire-crested Wren.

The Fire-crested Wren is much more rare than its congener the Golden-crested Wren. The Rev. Clement Ley has occasionally observed it in a group of fir trees at Sellack. A pair were in the Vicarage garden there in 1864, and it was an effort of self-denial on the part of Mr. Ley not to shoot them. It has been also seen in several shrubberies in the county.

[Regulus calendula—Ruby-crowned Wren.]
Loch Lomond, Scotland, 1852.

[Genus—Phylloscopus.]
[Phylloscopus superciliosus—Yellow-browed Warbler.]
Accidental visitor to England.

PHYLLOSCOPUS RUFUS—Chiff-Chaff.

[*Phylloscopus collybita—Yarrell.*]

With the first green needles of the larch, this hardy little bird may be looked for from the shores of the Mediterranean. With the exception of the Wheatear, the Chiff-Chaff is the earliest warbler to arrive, but as it is usually silent for some days after its arrival, it is generally supposed to appear at a later period than it really does come. It is very abundant throughout the county.

The Chiff-Chaff calls itself by its own name, since its song in words is represented by the syllables Chiff-chaff, chaff, chiff-chaff.

PHYLLOSCOPUS TROCHILUS—Willow Warbler.

This lively Willow Wren, as it is usually called, is frequent throughout the county. Its cheerful note, from the recesses of the low cluster of bushes it delights to occupy, may be heard in the early spring for the hour together. In the valley of the Wye it is very common. A cheerful colony always occupied the bushes on the river bank of the Castle Green, in Hereford, until the bushes were cut away. Its lively notes are, however, somewhat monotonous if listened to for some time.

A reference to this bird may well be inferred in the following lines by Tennyson—

> There is a little helpless innocent bird,
> Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er
> For all one April morning, till the ear
> Wearies to hear it.

PHYLLOSCOPUS SIBILATRIX—Wood Warbler.

The Wood Wren, as it is perhaps more often called, is a late arrival. It seldom appears before the last days of April, and sometimes not until the second week in May; its arrival, says Selby, coinciding with "the time of the elms and oaks bursting into leaf." It is a very local bird, and nowhere, perhaps, abundant in Herefordshire. It is shy and timorous. Mr. Evans says of it "when any foot approaches the neighbourhood of the nest, it utters a plaintive note, soft and melancholy beyond description. There is no scolding in it, no temper or violence, but quiet, pathetic remonstrance, a note that seems to say that all its hopes and treasures are at your mercy."

Mr. White, of Selborne, describes the song of the Wood Warbler as "joyous, easy, and laughing" "tweet, tweet" rapidly repeated with a soft tremulous accent

[Genus—Hypolais.]
[Hypolais icterina—Icterine Warbler.]
Dover and near Dublin.

[Genus—Aëdon.]
[Aëdon galactodes—Rufous Warbler.]
A rare accidental visitor to England.

Genus—ACROCEPHALUS.

ACROCEPHALUS STREPERUS—Reed Warbler.

This bird is not common in Herefordshire. In the southern districts of the county it is rarely found, but in the western and northern districts, in localities where reeds or bulrushes abound, a nest or two is generally to be met with, as at Tibberton, Moccas, Shobdon, &c. This bird shows a remarkable instinct in the construction of its nest, according to the locality in which it is built. If it is built in the branches of shrubs, lilac, privet, &c., as it often is in the midland counties, it is comparatively shallow; but when built on the stems of three or four reeds or bulrushes, as is usually the case in Herefordshire, it is made much more deep, to provide against the risk of the eggs being blown out; and if the reeds are in places much exposed to wind, as for example on the reedy margins of Llangorse Lake, the nest is not only made very deep, but its opening is contracted at the margin, so that if the reeds should be bent level with the water—even quite horizontally—the eggs would still be saved from rolling out. It is a cheerful, active bird, and often sings through the evening into night.

In the calm night, when all is still,
And not a voice is heard around,
Save the wild stream that from the hill
Falls downwith dashing sound;
When o'er the heath
The colddamp breath
Bends the tall reed with passing wing,
Upon its waving head alone I sing.

Evans—*Songs of the Birds.*

[ACROCEPHALUS PALUSTRIS—Marsh Warbler.]
Rare summer visitor to Southern counties of England.

[ACROCEPHALUS TURDOIDES—Great Reed-warbler.]
[*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*—*Yarrell.*]
An accidental visitor to England.

(ACROCEPHALUS AQUATICUS—Aquatic Warbler.]
[*Acrocephalus schensbœnus*—*Yarrell.*]
An accidental visitor to England.

ACROCEPHALUS PHRAGMITIS—SEDGE-WARBLER.

[*Acrocephalus schœnobœnus*—*Yarrell.*]

The sparrows chirp, and fly to fetch
The withered reed-down, rustling nigh,
And by the sunny side the ditch,
Prepare their dwelling warm and dry.
CLARE—*Last of March.*

This bird is common throughout the county, in the valleys of the Lugg, and the Arrow, and on the banks of the Wye. "The song of the Sedge-warbler," says Mr. Evans, "runs on in a strain of continued variety, though but of little power," and, as was observed by White, it has the faculty of imitating the notes of other species.

A very odd effect is at times produced by the notes being mixed and crowded up together, and uttered at such a rapid rate, that one wonders how any bird can articulate so fast, and why it is in such an overpowering hurry. It generally goes on singing late in the evening, and it has sometimes even been heard to sing in the night.

By yon fair willow'd stream,
When June, array'd in flowers,
Shines with her sunny gleam,
I spend my lonely hours,
Wary and shy,
From man's keen eye,
I safely hide, and sing my song unseen,
Close in the willow bush, beneath the tresses green.
EVANS—*Songs of the Birds.*

Genus—LOCUSTELLA.

LOCUSTELLA NÆVIA—Grasshopper Warbler.

[*Acrocephalus nævius—Yarrell.*]

The note of this bird has some resemblance to the rough, chirping noise of the grasshopper. White, of Selborne, first described it in 1768. It is a shy, vigilant bird, secreting itself in the hedge-bottom, or low vegetation, often creeping along for many yards in succession, more like a mouse than a bird. It is not uncommon in the midland districts of the county. "It is scarcely possible," says the Rev. Clement Ley, "to take an evening walk in June, in the Ross district, without hearing the ventriloquistic trill of this species, either in the clover, or grass fields, or in the hedges around them. I have found its nest in hedge-rows and ditches, but more often in open clover fields, supported by the stems of the clover, as the Reed Warbler's nest is supported by the stems of the reeds."

Mr. W. C. Blake says that Marcle Wood is a good locality for this bird, and that five or six have been seen there at one time. Mr. J. W. Lloyd reports that a nest with four eggs in it, was taken at Croft, in May, 1884.

[Locustella luscinioides—Savi's Warbler.]

[*Acrocephalus luscinioides—Yarrell.*]

A very rare summer visitor to England.

[Genus—Cettia.]

[Cettia sericea—Cetti's Warbler.]

Of very doubtful occurrence.

Genus—ACCENTOR.

ACCENTOR MODULARIS—Hedge-sparrow.

This gentle, unobtrusive bird, the "aizack" of Herefordshire boys, is happily very common throughout the county; there is

scarcely a hedge-row where it has not found a resting place. It always seems to live in pairs, and remains with us through the winter. In the earliest days of spring, its low, plaintive chirp, and the peculiar shake of the wings, which is always characteristic of this bird, tells the schoolboy that he may look for its nest and its pretty blue eggs. As it is nearly the first bird that forms a nest, and this being placed in a hedge still bare and leafless, with little art displayed in its concealment, it forms a tempting booty to every prying boy; but as the Hedge-sparrow rears two, or even three broods in succession, the later nests are more securely shielded.

"The Robin and the Wren often get the credit of his sweet minstrelsy," says Mr. Evans, "as he pours forth his sweet and lively song, from the seclusion of a low hedge or bush."

Many a sweeter voice than mine
Sounds in the summer bower;
And birds in gayer plumage shine,
Or sing with deeper power:
But do not turn your eye away
Because I'm brown and plain;
Nor scorn the simple songster's lay,
Though sung in lowly strain.

EVANS—*Songs of the Birds.*

The Cuckoo is very apt to deposit her egg in the nest of the Hedge-sparrow, to the destruction of the bird's own offspring. Shakespeare alludes to this:—

The Hedge-sparrow fed the Cuckoo so long,
That it had it's head bit off by its young.

KING LEAR.

[ACCENTOR COLLARIS—Alpine Accentor.]
Yorkshire, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, Essex, Devon, Gloucestershire, and Wales.

[Sub-family—MIMINÆ.]
[Genus—MIMUS.]
[MIMUS POLYGLOTTUS—Northern Mocking Bird.]
Escaped from a cage probably.

Family—CINCLIDÆ.

Genus—CINCLUS.

CINCLUS AQUATICUS—Dipper.

A cheerful bird, that loves the stream,
And the stream's voice, and answers, in like strains,
Murmuring deliciously. GRAHAME.

The Water Ouzel, as this interesting bird is more commonly called, is not uncommon on many of the weirs, waterfalls, and smaller streams of the county. Unlike the Kingfisher, it seems to prefer their seclusion to the more open spaces of the larger rivers, the Wye and the Lugg. In the very centre of the county Mr. J. H. Arkwright encourages its presence in the lawn rivulet of Hampton Court, but it is to be found on most of the small upland streams of the county, especially in the upper waters of the Lugg, where it may often be seen, perched on a large stone, or shooting with a swift and sudden flight, close to the surface of the water.

The food of the Water Ouzel consists principally of beetles, the larvæ of flies, fresh water shrimps, and other aquatic insects, and occasionally very small fish. The persecution to which this bird has been subjected by gamekeepers and water bailiffs, on the charge that it feeds upon the spawn of the salmon and the trout, has been clearly proved to be quite unjust. Mr. Saxby proved it in the "Zoologist" for 1868, and Mr. Frank Buckland in his book on "Fish-hatching," showed as the result of upwards of forty dissections of Water Ouzels, *killed on the spawning beds*, that so far from eating the salmon and trout eggs, it actually protects them, by destroying vast numbers of the water insects and larvæ which do prey upon the ova. The Water Ouzel has the very remarkable power of walking on the bed of the stream under water to search for its food; and the younger birds, just fledged from the nest, have this power as well as the older birds.

The birds seem always to associate in pairs, and build year after year in the same localities, and generally near a waterfall or quick running water. They are fond of building under bridges, and on the northern side of the county, in one instance, the stonework

below the iron girders of a railway bridge was selected. The exact localities are not given for obvious reasons. Its mode of nidification, the character of its song, and its personal bearing, much resemble the Wren, but it is a much larger bird. "It sings more often," says Mr. Evans, "in the days of the declining autumn, or in the dark ones of winter, than in the bright and stirring season of the opening spring. The song is peculiarly expressive of wild and lonely enjoyment."

Where the young stream is gushing
From its lone fountain head;
Where the wild river's rushing
Down o'er its rocky bed;
* * * *
There is my lonely home.

EVANS—*Songs of the Birds.*

It has been known to sing in the hardest frost, perched on a stone at the bottom of a weir.

[CINCLUS MELANOGASTER—Black-bellied Dipper.]
Norfolk, Yorkshire, and Ireland.

[Family—PANURIDÆ.]
[Genus—PANURUS.]
[PANURUS BIARMICUS—Bearded Titmouse.]
Confined to Norfolk and Cambridgeshire.

Family—PARIDÆ.
Genus—ACREDULA.
[ACREDULA CAUDATA—White-headed Long-tailed Titmouse.]
Accidentally met with on East Coast of Britain.

ACREDULA ROSEA—BRITISH LONG-TAILED TITMOUSE.

The Long-tailed Tit, or "Bottle Tit," as Herefordshire boys call this bird, from the shape of its nest, is a common and constant resident in the county. Another familar local name is also "Mummiruffin" or "Mumruffin."

During the winter months it may frequently be seen in flocks, from ten to twenty in number, flitting along the tall hedgerows, and in the tops of trees, attracting attention by its weak and plaintive note, "Tit, Tit, Tit," a password that seems to keep them all together.

The other kinds of Titmouse are very sociable, and often feed together and fly about in one flock; but the Long-tailed Tits are exclusive, and never mix with other birds. Perhaps their food is different.

The large oval-shaped nest, beautifully covered with grey lichens, has usually a small hole on one side near the top, by which the bird enters, but the Rev. Clement Ley has "not unfrequently found the nest in Herefordshire with two openings instead of one, and both made by the birds."

Genus—PARUS.

PARUS MAJOR—Great Titmouse.

This handsome and amusing bird is not uncommon in the more sheltered and enclosed districts of the county. Like the Tom Tit, it often chooses some peculiar situation for its nest; and instead of the hole of a wall, or a tree, will build it in the country way-side letter box, in the inside of a pump, or in an inverted garden flower pot.

The Great Tit when short of food becomes a murderer, for he will sometimes split open the skulls of other birds, and eat the brains.

[Parus ater—Continental Titmouse.]
Has once occurred in Norfolk.

PARUS BRITANNICUS—British Coal Titmouse.

[*Parus ater—Yarrell.*]

Not common, but it is found locally distributed throughout the county.

PARUS PALUSTRIS—Marsh Titmouse.

This bird occurs occasionally in the valleys of the rivers Wye and Lugg, notably at Letton and Backney Marsh. It is said to be more common in the northern districts of the county. The Rev. Clement Ley has "generally observed this species to be nearly as frequently met with at a distance from water as in its vicinity."

"The double note of the Marsh Tit," says Mr. Johns, "may be compared to the syllable 'If he, If he,' rapidly uttered and repeated in imitation of a sob."

PARUS CÆRULEUS—Blue Titmouse.

Least, nimblest, merriest bird of Albion's isle
I cannot look on thee without a smile.
Montgomery.

The familiar "Tom Tit" is very common throughout the county. He is a lively amusing little bird, and does not deserve the bad character he has got, with all the rest of his congeners, in the garden. A price was fomerly set upon the heads of Tom Tits by the churchwardens of the parish, and old parish accounts often include payments made for their destruction. The Tits are all insect feeders, and if a flock of them strip the buds from a fruit tree, say their defenders, it is to get at the insects already there; thus they are useful in their destructive habit, since probably there would not have been fruit in any case, though it must be confessed that many buds

are torn off without the least sign of an insect within. The Tits are all fond of flesh and fat, and the Tom Tit in particular during the severe winter months, is a close attendant on the country butcher's shop, passing through the open lattice work and helping himself, and he may frequently be seen to visit fearlessly the humble butcher's shop of the dog-kennel. If a bone with fresh meat upon it, or a lump of suet, or fat, be hung by a short string from the end of a rod, or the branch of a tree, near a sitting-room window, when the snow covers the ground, the Tits will soon find it out; and the act of charity will be rewarded by the amusement and delight afforded in watching the action of these pretty lively little birds. The various species of Tits, especially the Great Tit and the Tom Tit, which are very sociable with each other, delight in visiting the spot, and hang in a most amusing way, head downwards, on the bone as it sways to and fro, or on a slender twig.

Lithest, gaudiest harlequin!
Prettiest tumbler ever seen,
Light of heart, and light of limb
What is now become of him?
Where is he, that giddy sprite!
Blue Cap, with all his feathers bright.
* * * * * *
Hung with head towards the ground,
Fluttered, perched into a round,
Bound himself, and then unbound.

WORDSWORTH.

[PARUS CRISTATUS—Crested Titmouse.]

Extremely local in British Islands.

FAMILY—SITTIDÆ.

GENUS—SITTA.

SITTA CÆSIA—NUTHATCH.

The Nut-hatch piercing with strong bill.

SOUTHEY—*The Filbert.*

This nimble, active little bird is very common throughout the county, and is gifted with the power of climbing up and down

branches with equal facility. The Rev. Clement Ley "thinks its frequency throughout England is in proportion to the abundance of apple and pear trees, and that the Nuthatch is far more common here than in most counties." "It is very common at Aymestrey and its neighbourhood," says the Rev. Thomas Woodhouse, "and stays all the year. It is most ingenious in getting at the kernels of the nuts it feeds on. The nut is firmly wedged into a fork of a tree it takes a fancy to, and the bird hammers at it with all its might. Empty nuts are detected at once and thrown to the ground. The tree most frequented may soon be discovered by the litter beneath it."

The Nuthatch builds usually in a hole in the trunk of a tree, and if it is too large, the bird plasters the sides with mud to make it smaller.

Family—TROGLODYTIDÆ.

Genus—TROGLODYTES.

TROGLODYTES PARVULUS—Wren.

The Wren of softest note.
Coleridge.

Oh! that I were the little Wren
That shrilly chirps from yonder glen.
Kirke White—*Kept in School.*

The Wrens their pretty gossip spread
To join in a random roundelay.
Jean Ingelow—*Scholar.*

Cock Robin and Jenny Wren are the familiar favourites of our childhood. They seem to place confidence in man's kindness. The Wren, however, does not force itself so much into observation. It is a lively, restless little bird, and, when closely watched, it creeps, mouselike, out of sight in the hedge bottoms, or the faggot stack.

Busy as a Wren ; the viewless Wren ; self-contented Wren.
WORDSWORTH.

With head beneath her wing,
A little Wren was sleeping
So near, I had found it an easy thing
To steal her for my keeping.
JEAN INGELOW.

It is a hardy bird, and, by clustering together for mutual warmth during severe weather, generally manages to escape the cold, but the winter of 1880-1 was very fatal to the Wren, and its numbers are still below the average.

The cock bird has a cheerful lively note, and he often, in the sunshine of winter,

When icicles hang dropping from the rock,
Pipes his perennial lay.

The Wren often builds nests seemingly to desert them. Boys call them "Cock Wrens' nests."

The Wren seems to say—

We look not to the nest, our care
Is for the brood that nestles there.
EVANS—*Songs of the Birds.*

When once the family abode is taken up, however, the Wren is a diligent, anxious parent. The miracle of its successful care for its numerous progeny has often been commented on.

Fed in the dark, and yet not one forgot.
GRAHAME—*Birds of Scotland.*

The poor Wren,
The most diminutive of birds, will fight
Her young ones in her nest, against the owl.

The Wren in Ireland, and in the North, is sometimes persecuted on St. Stephen's Day, when a rhyme is sung by parties of men and boys :

The Wren, the Wren, the King of all birds
St. Stephen's day, was caught in the furze.
Sing holly, sing ivy, sing ivy, sing holly,
A drop to drink just to scare "melancholy."

In the West of England, however, a more favourable feeling is expressed in the distich :—

Whoso kills a Robin, or a Wren,
Never shall prosper, boy or man.

While in the North of England they say,

Malisons, malisons, more than ten,
Who harries the Queen of heaven's Wren.

There is an albino variety of the Wren in the Hereford Museum.

[Family—MOTACILLIDÆ.]

[Genus—MOTACILLA.]

[MOTACILLA ALBA—White Wagtail.]

A rare straggler to the South of England and Ireland.

MOTACILLA LUGUBRIS—PIED WAGTAIL.

What art thou made of? air, or light, or dew?
I have no time to tell you, if I knew.
My tail—ask that—perhaps may solve the matter,
I've missed three flies already by this chatter.
MONTGOMERY—*Birds.*

This bird is extremely common throughout the county, in the vicinity of ponds, streams, grassy lawns, or moist meadows. Some few of them remain for the winter. The Cuckoo is very fond of choosing the Wagtail's nest to deposit her own eggs in.

The Pied Wagtails, like the Swallows, are amongst the first birds to give notice of the presence of a Hawk. They are considered a delicacy on the Continent, and the bird-catchers there, avail themselves of the sympathy of the birds, in trying to help each other when in distress. They tie a live bird by the leg to the net, when its cries to escape, bring others round it, and they are thus easily caught.

MOTACILLA MELANOPE—Grey Wagtail.

[*Motacilla sulphurea—Yarrell.*]

This Wagtail occurs locally about the more secluded streams of the northern district of the county, but is nowhere plentiful.

The Grey Wagtail, Mr. W. C. Blake states, remains all the year round in the neighbourhood of Ross. They bred in 1884 in the brook which empties itself into the Wye just above the town, and he saw the young fledglings with the old birds. Mr. Blake thinks this species more partial to polluted brooks and foul ponds than to clear streams.

MOTACILLA FLAVA—Blue-headed Yellow Wagtail.

This rare species occurs regularly every season at Belmont, near Hereford, and from the length of its stay it is almost sure to breed there, although the actual fact of its doing so, yet remains to be proved. Mr. R. M. Lingwood says of this bird (Woolhope Transactions, 1861)—"Seen at Lyston, November, 1840, but not handled, and therefore doubtful."

[Motacilla viridis—Grey-headed Yellow Wagtail.]
A very doubtful English bird.

MOTACILLA RAII—Yellow Wagtail.

A regular summer visitant throughout the county, but more shy in its habits than the Pied Wagtail; it is to be found about cultivated fields, wheat and fallow lands, where it usually builds on the ground, beneath herbage.

Genus—ANTHUS.

ANTHUS PRATENSIS—Meadow-pipit.

The "Titlark," as this bird is commonly called, is frequent throughout the county. It is fond of building in the low tufts of heather on open downs. Three nests with eggs were found, on the visit of the Woolhope Club to the spur of the Black Mountains above Trewyn, May 15, 1884.

[Anthus cervinus—Red-throated Pipit.]
Unst, Shetland, 1854.

ANTHUS TRIVIALIS—Tree-pipit.

A common summer visitant throughout the county. Its rich, deeply coloured, reddish brown eggs are to be seen in every boy's collection.

[Anthus campestris—Tawny Pipit.]
An occasional straggler to the South Coast of England.

[Anthus richardi—Richard's Pipit.]
An occasional straggler during Autumnal migration.

[Anthus ludovicianus—American Pipit.]
Occurrence uncertain in England.

[Anthus spipoletta—Water-pipit.]
A very rare straggler in Britain.

[Anthus obscurus—Rock-pipit.]
A common resident in British Coasts.

[Family—Pycnonotidæ.]
[Genus—Pycnonotus.]
[Pycnonotus barbatus—Dusky Bulbul.]
Its occurrence in England very doubtful.

[Pycnonotus capensis—Gold-vented Thrush.]
Waterford, Ireland, 1838, doubtful.

Family—ORIOLIDÆ.

Genus—ORIOLUS.

ORIOLUS GALBULA—Golden Oriole.

This bird has been found in the county several times. There are two local specimens in our museum: one of these came from the collection of Mr. Moss, of Ross, and was taken at Weston-under-Penyard, near that town; the other was also killed at the Chase, near Ross, and was formerly in the collection of the Philosophical Society. The late Rev. Henry Cooper Key saw the Golden Oriole at Sugwas; and Mr. Charles Fortey states that one was seen in 1883 at Hay Park, near Ludlow. In the middle of May, 1884, a pair of Orioles were seen and watched at Monnington-on-Wye. The Golden Oriole, according to M. Prevost's list, is a very destructive visitor to the gardens, but it is too rare a bird to render it necessary to point out its misdemeanours, or to disturb the equanimity of our gardeners.

Family—LANIIDÆ.

Genus—LANIUS.

LANIUS EXCUBITOR—Great Grey Shrike.

An occasional visitant to the county, and generally in the neighbourhood of the Black Mountains. Mr. Lingwood records it

as occurring at Garway; the Rev. Clement Ley met with a flock in winter time on the Black Mountains (Woolhope Trans. 1869, p. 72); and one was killed at Bredwardine in the autumn of 1877. The specimens in the Hereford Museum came from the Forest of Dean. The blue "Tom Tit" seems to be a favourite food of this bird, but it devours other small birds, frogs, &c.

This bird derives its name "Excubitor," (Sentinel) from its habit of posting itself on the topmost bough of a poplar, or other tall tree, to keep a look out for its prey; and if a Hawk should appear, it shrieks out a warning that is unmistakable. Its own note is somewhat similar to that of a Kestrel, but it has a very remarkable power of imitating the songs of other birds; as the Nightingale, Thrush, Robin, Swallow, etc.

[LANIUS MAJOR—Pallas's Great Grey Shrike.]
An occasional visitant to Great Britain on migration.

[LANIUS EXCUBITORIDES—American Grey Shrike.]
Of doubtful occurrence in England.

[LANIUS MINOR—Lesser Grey Shrike.]
A rare accidental visitor to England.

LANIUS COLLURIO—RED-BACKED SHRIKE.

> The May-fly is torn by the Swallow, the Sparrow spear'd by the Shrike,
> And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of plunder and prey.
> TENNYSON—*Maud.*

This bird, the "Butcher Bird," as it is sometimes called, is not uncommon in particular localities throughout the county, and its beautiful eggs are to be seen in almost every schoolboy's collection. It usually visits the same locality, year after year. The Rev. Clement Ley observed it in the same place, near Ross, for 23 years;

and in the tall hedges of the tram-way, within half a mile of the City of Hereford, it built for many years in succession, indeed until the hedges were cut down low.

[LANIUS POMERANUS—Woodchat.]
An accidental visitor to England on migration.

[Family—VIREONIDÆ.]
[Genus—VIREO.]
[VIREO OLIVACEUS—Red-eyed Flycatcher.]
Said to have been caught near Derby, 1859. Not elsewhere in Europe.

FAMILY—AMPELIDÆ.

GENUS—AMPELIS.

AMPELIS GARRULUS—BOHEMIAN WAXWING.

A Bohemian Waxwing seems to have found its way, upon one occasion, to this county. Mr. Lingwood says, "seen in the flesh at Baker's in Hereford, 1856." It is possibly the same specimen which is now in the Hereford Museum.

AMPELIS CEDRORUM—Cedar-bird.]
Stockton-on-Tees, 1850. A probable escape.

FAMILY—MUSCICAPIDÆ.

GENUS—MUSCICAPA.

MUSICAPA GRISOLA—SPOTTED FLYCATCHER.

A common summer visitant to the county. It builds and rears its brood annually in the garden of Harley House, in the centre of

the city of Hereford. "A Spotted Flycatcher built its nest in the corner of Mr. Thos. Andrew Knight's stove at Downton for several successive years; and he observed that the bird, when sitting, quitted its eggs when the thermometer in the house was above 72°, and resumed her place upon the nest, when the temperature fell below this."

The food of the Spotted Flycatcher consists exclusively of insects, and the way in which it darts out from its favourite perch, a branch of a tree, a post, or sometimes a croquet hoop, at every insect that comes near, is very amusing to watch.

MUSCICAPA ATRICAPILLA—PIED FLYCATCHER.

A rare visitant to this county. The Rev. Clement Ley has "noticed this bird on different occasions, in different and very diverse localities in the western part of the county. In June, 1873, I noticed a pair of these birds at the eastern end of Moccas pool. From their anxiety they had probably a nest of young ones in the immediate vicinity, and judging from the position of two nests I found before, it would be in a small deep hole of some one of the many old oak trees there." The Rev. W. Baskerville Mynors also observed a Pied Flycatcher at Llanwarne in 1883.

[MUSICAPA COLLARIS—White-collared Flycatcher.]
Of doubtful occurrence.

[MUSICAPA PARVA—Red-breasted Flycatcher.]
Once in Cornwall. Twice in the Scilly Islands.

[Section—OSCINES LATIROSTRES.]
[Family—HIRUNDINIDÆ.]
[Genus—HIRUNDO.]
[HIRUNDO SAVIGNII—Chestnut-bellied Swallow.]
Very doubtful indeed.

HIRUNDO RUSTICA—Swallow.

The Swallow, oft, beneath my thatch
Shall twitter from her clay built nest."
ROGERS.

The Swallow for a moment seen,
Skims in haste the village green.
WARTON.

Swallow! Swallow! hither wing,
Dearest playmate of the Spring.
BENNETT.

Nigra velut magnas domini cum divitis ædes
Pervolat, et pennis alta atria lustrat hirundo,
Pabula parva legens, nidisque loquacibus escas;
Et nunc porticibus vacuis, nunc humida circum
Stagna sonat.
VIRG—*Æn xii., 473.*

As the black Swallow near the palace plies;
O'er empty courts, and under arches flies;
Now hawks aloft, now skims along the flood,
To furnish her loquacious nests with food.
DRYDEN.

Swift through the air, her rounds the Swallow takes,
Or sportive skims the level of the lakes.
BROWNE—*Pastoral.*

"The Swallow," says Sir Humphry Davy in *Salmonia*, is one of my favourite birds, and a rival of the Nightingale; for he cheers my sense of seeing, as much as the other does my sense of hearing. He is the glad prophet of the year—the harbinger of the best season; he lives a life of enjoyment among the lordliest forms of nature; winter is unknown to him, and in the autumn he leaves the green meadows of England, for the myrtle and orange groves of Italy, and for the palms of Africa."

But he arrives earlier in the South of Europe than he does here; which made the old Greek proverb to run, "One Swallow does not make a *spring*," instead of "summer," as we have it.

The Swallow, (privileg'd, above the rest
Of all the birds as man's familiar guest,)
Pursues the sun in Summer brisk and bold,
But wisely shuns the persecuting cold.
* * * * * *
Such auguries of winter thence she drew,
Which by instinct or prophecy she knew;
When prudence warn'd her to remove betimes,
And seek a better heaven and warmer climes.

Her sons were summon'd on a steeple's height,
And, call'd in common council, vote a flight.
* * * * *
Her youthful offspring to their haunts repair,
And glide along in glades, and skim in air,
And dip for insects in the purling springs
And stoop on rivers, to refresh their wings.

DRYDEN—*Hind and Panther.*

The Swallow nevertheless seems not always able to avoid the fatality of atmospheric changes; for during the Summer of 1881 the number of Swallows, Martins, and Swifts, usually abundant in this county, was very greatly reduced, presumably from the severe winter of 1880-81, as is known to have been the case with the great majority of other birds.

The Swallow builds on rafters, in barns and other buildings, as was the case in Virgil's day.

Ante
Garrula quam tignis nidum suspendat Hirundo.

VIRG.—*Geo. iv., p. 307.*

Before the noisy Swallow's nest depends
From the strong beam that through the roof extends.

But bid the sacred Swallow haunt the caves,
To guard his roof from lightning and from thieves.

HOOD—*Plea for Midsummer Faries.*

The Swallow on its arrival, the time of which varies somewhat according to the locality, at once attaches itself to the habitation of mankind, as is so well known. Tennyson makes it sympathize with our feelings too in his love song:—

O, Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying South.
* * * * *
O, tell her, brief is life, but love is long,
And brief the sun of summer in the North,
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

Hire song, it was so loud and yerne,
As any swallow sitting on a barne.

CHAUCER—*Miller's Tale.*

The flying of Swallows, is a country sign of the weather.

When Swallows fleet soar high, and sport in air,
He told us that the welkin would be clear.

GAY—*Pastoral.*

Above in the wind was the Swallow,
Chasing itself, at its own wild will.

TENNYSON—*The Dying Swan.*

Gathering Swallows twitter in the skies.

KEATS—*Autumn.*

Or like the Swallow skims
The russet plain.
SOMERVILLE—*Field Sport.*

The Swallows are unlucky birds to kill.
DRYDEN—*Hind and Panther.*

Loud twittering Swallows.
ELIZA COOK.

The chattering Swallows.
SAVAGE.

The little Swallow's wanton wing.
BURNS.

The winding Swallows.
QUARLES.

The arrowy Swallow.
JEAN INGELOW.

The wheeling Swallow.
WORDSWORTH.

[HIRUNDO RUFULA—Red-rumped Swallow.]
Once reported to have been seen at Penzance.

[HIRUNDO BICOLOR—White-bellied Swallow.]
Said to have been once seen near Derby in 1850.

GENUS—CHELIDON.

CHELIDON URBICA—MARTIN.

The dingy Martin.
ELIZA COOK.

The pretty, friendly Martin, is happily common throughout Herefordshire. The popular idea that good luck attends the house that Martins build on, is well put by Shakespeare :—

This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting Martlet does approve
By his lov'd mansionry, that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here ; no jutty, frieze,
Buttress, nor coign of vantage but this bird
Hath made his pendent bed, and procreant cradle :
Where they most breed and haunt, I have observ'd
The air is delicate.
—*Macbeth, I., 6.*

The Martin, like the Swallow, the Sand-martin, and the Swift, comes to us from Africa; but the Martin usually arrives some days later than the Swallow, and seems rather to prefer building in towns than on lone separate houses.

> Whence drew the Martin his superior skill,
> To knead and temper, mason-like, the slime
> Of street or stagnant pool, and build aloft
> Beneath the cornice brink, or shady porch,
> His snug dependent couch, on nothing hung;
> Founded in air, and finished with a neat
> Convenient aperture, from whence he bolts
> Sudden, and whither brisk returns, with mouth
> Fill'd for his offspring.
>
> HURDIS—*Favorite Village.*

GENUS—COTILE.

COTILE RIPARIA—SAND-MARTIN.

This bird, the smallest of its tribe, is very local in Herefordshire, there being but few places suitable for its nests. In the Wye valley, and indeed throughout the county, where a vein of sand is exposed above flood level, a colony establishes itself, as at the Weir, and at the high river bank close to Clifford Castle; and they have recently established themselves in the mound at the back of the Rifle-butts, Warham. But in Herefordshire such spots are rare, as gravel is scarce throughout the county, and sand almost unknown. How such tiny creatures can excavate such holes at all, is a marvel, but they congregate in large colonies, wherever they establish themselves. Their nests are said generally to abound in fleas, especially as the summer advances. Boys, beware!

[Genus—PROGNE.]

[PROGNE PURPUREA—Purple Martin.]

Said to have been shot at Kingston, County Dublin, 1840.

SECTION—OSCINES CURVIROSTRES.

FAMILY—CERTHIIDÆ.

GENUS—CERTHIA.

CERTHIA FAMILIARIS—TREE-CREEPER.

This small unobtrusive bird is probably more common throughout the county than is generally thought.

It is not uncommon about Aymestrey. The Rev. Thomas Woodhouse says, "Its movements have a marked resemblance to those of a mouse; it has the oddest way of running up the trunk and round the branches of the trees, in a rapid, stealthy, hurried manner."

Its small size, brown colour, and quick creeping movements, enable it easily and dexterously to elude observation by passing behind the tree in its diligent search for insects.

[TRICHODROMA MURARIA—Wall-creeper.]
Norfolk, 1792. No late record.

[Section—OSCINES CONIROSTRES.]
[Family—FRINGILLIDÆ.]
[Sub-family—FRINGILLINÆ.]
[Genus—CYANOSPIZA.]
[CYANOSPIZA CIRIS—Nonpareil Finch.]
Portland Island, 1802; probably an escape from confinement.

GENUS—CARDUELIS.

CARDUELIS ELEGANS—GOLDFINCH.

The gowd-spink, music's gayest child.
BURNS.

Goldfinch, pride of woodland glade,
In thy jet and gold array'd,
Gentle bird, that lov'st to feed
On the thistle's downy seed,
Freely frolic, lightly sing,
In the sunbeam spread thy wing.

This most beautiful of the Finches, sometimes called "the Seven Coloured Linnet," is fairly plentiful, and distributed generally throughout the county. In the autumn it congregates in considerable flocks to feed on the thistle down in open localities, such as commons and hills.

The Goldfinch is the farmer's great friend, for its favourite food is the seed of thistles, and it also freely eats those of dandelions and other weeds.

But mark the pretty bird, himself, how light
And quick his every motion, every note!
How beautiful his plumes; his red ringed head;
His breast of brown; and see him stretch his wings,
A fairy face of golden spokes it seems.
Oft on a thistle tuft, he, whistling, sits
Light on the down; then, midst a flight of down,
He wings his way piping his shrillest call.

GRAHAME—*Birds of Scotland.*

The song of the Goldfinch is not powerful, but it is very soft and expressive. We may be sure when we hear it, that Spring has once more returned; and even when in captivity, amidst the smoke and dirt of a crowded city, the heart of the artisan is cheered by the remembrance of green lanes, and scented hedge-rows, as he listens to the sweet song poured forth by the contented little prisoner.

The nest of the Goldfinch is small, and very neatly covered with white lichens. It is usually situated near the end of a bough, and to prevent the eggs being blown out by the wind, it is deep and contracted round the opening. The beauty of the birds and nests together is very remarkable.

Gaylard he was, as Goldfynch in the schawe.

CHAUCER—*The Cokes Tale.*

The Goldfinch weaves, with yellow down inlaid,
And cannach tufts his wonderful abode.

GRAHAME—*Birds of Scotland.*

Cowper's lament on the Goldfinch starved to death in its cage should shame the keepers of such pretty pets to greater care :—

> Time was when I was free as air,
> The thistle's downy seed my fare,
> My drink the morning dew;
> I perch'd at will on every spray,
> My form genteel, my plumage gay,
> My strains for ever new.
>
> COWPER—*Goldfinch.*

[Genus—CHRYSOMITRIS.]

[CHRYSOMITRIS CITRINELLA—Citril Finch.]

Of most doubtful occurrence.

CHRYSOMITRIS SPINUS—SISKIN.

[*Carduelis spinus*—*Yarrell.*]

This pretty little Finch occurs sparingly throughout the county. It was present in May, 1883, in the shrubberies of Letton Court, where it bred in all probability.

The Rev. Clement Ley says it usually frequents the willows on the banks of the Wye, near Ross, in small flocks during the winter.

[Genus—CRITHAGRA.]

[CRITHAGRA CHRYSOPYGA—Yellow-rumped Seed-eater.]

Near Portsmouth, 1853.

[Genus—SERINUS.]

[SERINUS HORTULANUS—Serin.]

Somersetshire, Sussex, and near London.

[SERINUS CANARIUS—Canary.]

Escaped from captivity.

Genus—LIGURINUS.

LIGURINUS CHLORIS—Greenfinch.

[*Coccothraustes chloris—Yarrell.*]

Like the Linnet green in May,
Flitting to each blooming spray.
A. Phillips—*Odes.*

The Greenfinch is very common in every part of the county, and remains with us throughout the year. It is a good friend to the farmer and gardener, as it feeds its young entirely upon soft seeds, thus destroying countless weeds. It begins to sing rather late in the Spring, and will in captivity imitate the songs of other birds.

One have I marked, the happiest guest
In all this covert of the blest ;
Hail to thee, far above the rest
In joy of voice and pinion !
Thou Linnet ! in thy green array.
Presiding spirit here to-day,
Dost lead the revels of the May ;
And this is thy dominion.
Wordsworth—*Green Linnet.*

Genus—COCCOTHRAUSTES.

COCCOTHRAUSTES VULGARIS—Hawfinch.

The Hawfinch is not a common bird in Herefordshire, and yet it is a regular winter visitant in some localities, a few remaining to breed. A pair of Hawfinches were shot by the late Mr. Pearce in the shrubberies at Culver Hill, Norton Canon (c 1845.) Mr. Lingwood's notes say, "Lyston, 1847 ; Aylston Wood, nesting, 1849 ; Lyston, March, 1860." The late Captain Mayne Reid found a nest with two eggs in it near Ross (c. 1878), and these eggs are now in the possession of Mr. W. C. Blake, of Ross. Nests have also been found at Colwall. The Hawfinch built in an apple tree at Lucton, June, 1884 ; and there was another nest at

Walford, in June, 1884. A Hawfinch was caught in a trap at Stretton Rectory in 1878 or 1879. It had both its legs broken, so could not be released. It was a hen bird, and bit fiercely, with the wonderful strength of beak characteristic of the bird. It was sent to the Hereford Museum. The Hawfinch has also been shot in many places in the county. A specimen at this time (March, 1884) has just been brought to the Museum from Dormington, where it was shot on a heap of apple refuse.

This bird will sometimes suspend itself by the beak like a parrot.

Genus—PASSER.

PASSER DOMESTICUS—House-sparrow.

> In busy mart, and crowded street,
> Here the smoke-brown Sparrow sits.
>
> Eliza Cook—*Birds.*

> Where noisy Sparrows perch'd on pent-house near,
> Chirp tuneless joy, and mock the frequent tear.
>
> Crabbe—*Baptism.*

This highly intelligent bird is as abundant and self-possessed in Herefordshire as it is throughout England. If it does not quite understand the human language, it appreciates very cleverly every intonation of the human voice, and knows in an instant whether it has to deal with a friend or an enemy.

This pert little impudent bird is well nigh omnivorous. M. Prevost says "it varies its food according to circumstances. In a wood, it lives on insects and seeds; in a village, it eats seeds, grain, and grubs of butterflies, &c.; in a city, it lives on all kinds of *débris;* but it prefers cockchafers, and some other insects to all other food." It eats caterpillars in a garden, but it destroys young peas just coming up, crocus blossoms, and all sorts of garden seeds, and is far too cunning to be kept away by anything but a net.

Touch not the little Sparrow, who doth build
His home so near us. He doth follow us
From spot to spot, amidst the turbulent town,
And ne'er deserts us. To all other birds,
The woods suffice, the rivers, the sweet fields,
And nature in her aspect mute and fair;
But he doth herd with man.
BARRY CORNWALL.

PASSER MONTANUS—TREE-SPARROW.

From the summit of the leafless elm,
Excessive chirpings pour, fond parliament
Where all are speakers, and none sits to hear.
HURDIS—*Favorite Village.*

A more shy and solitary bird than the House-sparrow, but common throughout the county in all suitable localities, as any one who distinguishes the note will testify. Hard weather may make them associate with each other, but they are very distinct birds. The Tree-sparrow has its own peculiar habits and instincts. Its gentle song may often be heard in the depth of winter.

One gleam of merry sunlight thrown
The opening clouds between,
Wakes up my song the warmth to own,
Cheering the winter scene.
EVANS—*Songs of the Birds.*

GENUS—FRINGILLA.

FRINGILLA CÆLEBS—CHAFFINCH.

The merry Chaffinch.
MACKAY.

I'm the "perpetuum mobile" of birds;
My days are running, rippling, twittering streams;
When fast asleep, I'm broad awake in dreams.
MONTGOMERY—*Birds.*

The Pyefinch, or Pinkin, as it is locally called, is very common throughout the county, where some few hen birds certainly remain through the winter.

Linnæus gave it the name of *Cælebs* (or bachelor) from flocks of males only remaining for the winter.

A strange variety in the eggs of the Chaffinch has been observed by the Rev. Clement Ley in Herefordshire and elsewhere. They are nearly round, larger and heavier than usual, with the colour of the Bullfinch's egg, but with less decided markings.

The Chaffinch is a bold pugnacious bird, who fights furiously for his lady's love in the spring, to desert her in autumn. His song is cheerful, and seems to speak of happiness and enjoyment, but there is little melody, and no softness in it.

On the Continent the male Chaffinch is much esteemed. "Gai comme pinçon" is a proverb; and in Germany they are taught to sing matches against each other.

While the Chaffinch sings on the orchard bough.
BROWNING.

She sits conceal'd
Within the nest deep-hollowed, well disguised
With lichens grey and mosses gradual blent,
As if it were a knurle in the bough.
GRAHAME—*Birds of Scotland.*

FRINGILLA MONTIFRINGILLA—BRAMBLING OR MOUNTAIN-FINCH.

The fox-glove tall—
. . . . Bends beneath the upspringing Lark
Or Mountain Finch alighting.
COLERIDGE—*The Keepsake.*

A frequent winter visitant to this county, but its numbers vary greatly in different seasons. It is usually to be met with in all the midland districts of the county, in small flocks, often associating with Linnets, Chaffinches, and other small birds.

Genus—LINOTA.

LINOTA CANNABINA—Linnet.

And the gay Linnet, and the airy Thrush,
Responsive whistle from the hawthorn bush.
Mary Howett.

Some humble heart is sore and sick with grief,
And straight thou comest with thy gentle song,
To wile the sufferer from his hate or wrong,
By bringing nature's love to his relief.
Linnet, wild Linnet!
Robert Nicoll.

This active lively bird is abundant in Herefordshire. The Linnets in the autumn and winter months congregate together very merrily. "Everyone in the country," says Sir William Jardine, "towards the close of a fine winter evening, must often have remarked the Linnets perched on the summit of some bare tree, pluming themselves in the last rays of the sun, chirruping the commencement of their evening song, then bursting simultaneously into one general chorus; again resuming their single strains, and again joining, as if happy and rejoicing at the termination of their day's employment." In spring they resort in pairs by preference to the blooming furze bushes on the wild common.

Nor are the Linnets, o'er the flowering furze
Pour'd out profusely, silent.
Thomson—*Spring.*

The Linnet gets its scientific name from the preference it shows to the seeds of the flax, *linum*, and hemp, *cannabis*.

LINOTA LINARIA—Mealy Redpoll.

This bird is not abundant in Herefordshire, but it does often occur, and probably is still more often overlooked.

LINOTA RUFESCENS—Lesser Redpoll.

The Lesser Redpoll must also be pronounced as not common in Herefordshire. Small flocks are sometimes seen during the winter months, and it is believed that a few remain to nest here. It chooses a very similar situation to that of the Chaffinch for building its very small nest. "It is far more rare here in summer," says Mr. Ley, "than in the more northern counties."

[Linota hornemanni—Greenland Redpoll.]
Accidental in Europe. Whitburn, Durham, 1885.

LINOTA FLAVIROSTRIS—Twite.

The Twite is a winter visitant, whose numbers vary very much. On the slopes of the Black Mountains, and in the higher districts of the county, it is sometimes to be seen in tolerable abundance.

[Sub-family—Loxiinæ.]
[Genus—Carpodacus.]
[Carpodacus erythrinus—Rosy Bullfinch.]
Once near Brighton, and once near London.

Genus—PYRRHULA.

PYRRHULA EUROPÆA—Bullfinch.

The mellow Bullfinch answers from the grove.
Thomson—*Seasons.*

Whistles soft his flute-like note.
Savage—*Wanderer.*

Bully, what fairy warbles in thy throat?
—"Oh for the freedom of my own wild note!
Art hath enthralled my voice. I strive in vain
To break the linked sweetness of my chain;
Love, joy, rage, grief, ring out melodious strain.
MONTGOMERY—*Birds.*

This bird is fairly common throughout the county, and is sometimes seen in considerable numbers. A spring rarely passes without an invasion of the city gardens by a flock of Bullfinches. In their search for insects they are apt to disbud the fruit trees altogether, and they are thus no favourites with the gardeners. The buds of many trees have a great attraction for them, not only of the gooseberry, apple, pear, plum, and cherry, but also of the white and black thorn, the larch and birch trees, and if allowed they will destroy them all.

The Bullfinch, for some reason or other, is called a "Whoop" in Herefordshire, and would not be known amongst common people by any other name. He sometimes also is called a "Tope".

[Genus—PINICOLA.]
[PINICOLA ENUCLEATOR—Pine-grosbeak.]
[*Pyrrhula enucleator—Yarrell.*]
Said to have occurred near Newcastle, and also near Exeter.

[Genus—LOXIA.]
[LOXIA PITYOPSITTACUS—Parrot Crossbill.]
Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Middlesex, and Hampshire.

LOXIA CURVIROSTRA—CROSSBILL.

This very interesting bird is a frequent visitant to Herefordshire, and sometimes stays to breed here. It is much more numerous in some seasons than others. In years favourable to its appearance here, numerous small flocks may be observed all

through the county wherever the larch, spruce, or Scotch firs abound. "In 1868," says the Rev. Clement Ley, "June was the only month out of twelve successive months in which the Crossbills failed to appear in the Vicarage garden at Sellack, near Ross. They came in small companies, usually with one or two young birds in each flock, and seldom remained above a few hours; curiously enough, they generally came in the odd numbers of three, five, or seven. They are tame, bold birds, and are not afraid of being looked at. Very curious and interesting it was to watch their parrot-like movements, as they climbed from bough to bough of the spruce fir trees, frequently breaking off a spray with a cone attached to it. This they grasped in their claws whilst they extracted the seeds, producing a loud snapping noise with their powerful bills. Amongst them were several young males of the year, whose brilliant rosy plumage formed a striking contrast to the almost sooty hues of their companions." A small flock visited the Scotch fir plantation near the gardens at Holme Lacy for many years in succession, and this, too, generally presented the mysterious odd numbers of five or seven. They have also been observed at Breinton, Colwall, Dinmore, and other places where fir plantations abound.

Mr. James W. Lloyd exhibited young birds shot in the neighbourhood of Kington in the year 1868.

Mr. Edwin Lees, writes—"In an old History of Birds, published in the last century, it is said that Crossbills visit the orchards of Herefordshire and Worcestershire in great numbers, destroying the apples for the sake of their enclosed kernels, and hence the bird received the name of 'Shell-apple.'"

The bill of the young bird in the nest is not crossed, but it becomes so when it begins to seek its food for itself. This crossing of the mandibles is quite unique, and has given rise to the legend that this bird acquired its peculiar conformation of bill and coloration of plumage, from its efforts to withdraw the nails and release the suffering Saviour at the crucifixion. This legend is best known by Longfellow's version of Mosen's poem, which concludes thus:

And that bird is called the cross-bill:
Covered all with blood so clear.
In the groves of pine it singeth
Songs, like legends, strange to hear.

[Loxia leucoptera—White-winged Crossbill.]
Worcester, 1838; Great Yarmouth, 1870.

[Loxia bifasciata—Two-barred Crossbill.]
Cumberland, Suffolk, Essex, and Cornwall.

[Sub-family—Emberizinæ.]
[Genus—Emberiza.]
[Emberiza melanocephala—Black-headed Bunting.]
[*Euspiza melanocephala*—*Yarrell.*]
Brighton, 1868.

EMBERIZA MILIARIA—Corn Bunting.

The Bunting, or Bunting Lark, is not unfrequent; being fairly distributed over the arable parts of the county. It can scarcely be said to be abundant in Herefordshire. It lives in pairs during the spring and summer, but becomes gregarious through the autumn and winter, when it associates with Chaffinches, Yellow Hammers, Linnets, Sparrows, and other farm-yard visitors. It feeds on corn and seeds of plants principally, and is so determined a corn hunter, that it will pull out the straws from the stack to get at the ears of corn, and in this way a flock of them sometimes does much mischief.

This Bunting is thought to be a favourite quarry of the Sparrow Hawk, from its being often found in the Hawk's stomach by the bird-stuffer.

EMBERIZA CITRINELLA—Yellow-hammer.

[*Yellow-bunting—Yarrell.*]

I even love the Yellow-hammer's song.
When earliest birds begin to budge, his note,
Simple, reiterated, oft is heard
In leafless briar, or half-grown hedgerow tree;
Nor is he silent until autumn's leaves
Fall fluttering round his head of golden hue.
Grahame—*Birds of Scotland.*

The Yellow-hammer, or Writing Lark, as schoolboys call it, from the lines and blots of reddish purple which cover its eggs, is a very common bird to be seen on every sunny hedgerow. The cock bird is very handsome, and would be highly esteemed if it were more rare. The Yellow-hammer is given to frequent the same localities year after year, and may always be found about the same hedges and fields.

"In the deep silence of noon," says Mr. Evans, "when scarcely a bird's voice is to be heard, and the songsters seem all to be taking their rest, as the Yellow-hammer sits on the topmost bough of the hedge, his peculiar note with its long plaintive cadence still rings in our ears."

Each bird, now day is at its height,
Flies off on careless wing,
And in the depth of their delight
They all forget to sing!
My lowly note is left alone,
To break the stillness of the golden noon.
Evans—*Songs of the Birds.*

Its song consists simply of a single note eight or ten times rapidly repeated, finishing with one long drawn out note, in a lower key. Country people translate it thus:

A little bit of bread and butter and no c-h-e-e-s-e.

In Scotland the interpretation, according to Macgillivray, is different, he giving it thus:

Deil, deil, deil, deil, tak ye-e-e-e.
(*i.e.*, ye who would rob his nest.)

It is a grain and seed eating bird, partially useful and partially

mischievous. The description of the situation its nest is usually found in, is well given by Grahame :

> Up from that ford a little bank there was,
> With alder-copse and willow overgrown,
> Now worn away by mining winter floods ;
> There at a bramble root, sunk in the grass.
> The hidden prize of withered field straws formed,
> Well lined with many a coil of hair and moss.
> And in it laid five red-veined spheres, I found.
> —*Birds of Scotland.*

EMBERIZA CIRLUS—Cirl Bunting.

This bird is a native of the county, and not an occasional visitant. It is more shy than the Yellow-hammer, and thus perhaps not so often observed. "Anyone," says Mr. Ley, "who can distinguish its note," will come to the conclusion that it is not an uncommon bird in Herefordshire. It takes up its residence in certain localities, where it is always to be seen year after year. The male bird selects a favourite tree, from which to sing its monotonous song. This song is somewhat like that of the Yellow Hammer, without the long final note, and is given doubtless for the delectation of its mate seated on her eggs. There is one such selected spot on the Callow Pitch ; another at Birch ; another at King's Caple ; another at the Chase, Ross, and probably many others. The nest is very difficult to find ; one was found with eggs in it close to Mitcheldean-road station in 1880.

[Emberiza hortulana—Ortolan Bunting.]
South and East of England.

[Emberiza rustica—Rustic Bunting.]
Brighton and Yorkshire.

[Emberiza pusilla—Little Bunting.]
Brighton, 1864.

EMBERIZA SCHŒNICLUS—Reed-bunting.

The Reed Sparrow, or Black-headed Bunting, is widely distributed in Herefordshire, but is nowhere very plentiful. Where reeds, rushes, osiers, and alders are plentiful, there the Reed Bunting takes up its spring and summer quarters; and the male bird, with its black head and white collar, will generally attract notice. Its food consists of all sorts of aquatic insects and small crustacea, as well as corn and seeds of various weeds; nor does it disdain to leave its secluded retreats, to join the public crowd in visiting the farm yards during autumn and winter.

[Genus—Calcarius.]

[Calcarius lapponicus—Lapland Bunting.]

[*Plectrophanes lapponicus—Yarrell.*]

Brighton, London, Norfolk, Shropshire, Lancashire, Westmoreland.

Genus—PLECTROPHANUS.

PLECTROPHANES NIVALIS—Snow-bunting.

A very rare visitor to the county. Mr. Lingwood says in his notes—"Seen in the flesh at Baker's (the bird-stuffer's), in Hereford, December, 1854; shot on the Malvern Hills by Mr. Archer in February, 1856; and also at Pool Cottage, Much Dewchurch, 1856." The last specimen is now in the Hereford Museum.

[Genus—Zonotrichia.]

[Zonotrichia albicollis—White-throated Song-sparrow.]

Aberdeen, 1867; Brighton, 1872, probably escapes.

[Section—Oscines cultrirostres.]

[Family—Icteridæ.]

[Genus—Agelæus.]

[Agelæus phœniceus—Red-winged Starling.]

[Genus—STURNELLA.]
[STURNELLA MAGNA—American Meadow Starling.]
Norfolk, 1854.

[Genus—SCOLECOPHAGUS.]
[SCOLECOPHAGUS FERRUGINEUS—Rusty Grackle.]
Cardiff, 1881.

FAMILY—STURNIDÆ.

GENUS—STURNUS.

STERNUS VULGARIS—STARLING.

I can't get out ! I can't get out !
—*Sterne's Starling.*

The byrdes gay,
Starling, Cuckoo, or Popynjay.

Of all the birds whose tuneful throats,
Do welcome in the verdant spring,
I prefer the Steerling's notes,
And think she does most sweetly sing.
ALLAN RAMSAY.

The "Stare," as it is commonly called in Herefordshire, is very abundant throughout the county. Great numbers of them must have been destroyed by the severe weather of 1880-1, since they were very much less numerous during the following summer, but they are increasing again very rapidly. The imposition of the gun license favours the Starlings greatly, and it is well that it does so, for their general usefulness to farmers in particular, and to mankind in general, can no longer be questioned. In a paper on "The Food of Small Birds," published in the Zoologist for 1863, M. Prevost gives the results drawn from anatomical examinations of the crops of many birds at different months of the year, in order to estimate the benefit, or the injury, rendered by them to mankind. The monthly food of the Starling M. Prevost gives as follows :— "January, worms, grubs of cockchafers, and grubs in dung; February, grubs, snails, and slugs ; March, grubs of cockchafers and snails ;

April, the same; May, the same, with grasshoppers; June, flies, and grubs of various flies; July, grubs and fresh water shell fish; August, flies, glowworms, and various beetles; September, green locusts, grubs of carrion beetles and worms; October, worms and beetles; November and December, snails, slugs, and grubs. In summer it adds a little fruit, and in winter hips, haws, and buds of trees." The gardeners, however, bring no complaints against Starlings here, and these details prove their great usefulness in destroying an abundance of insects.

In the Zoologist (p. 9280) an instance is mentioned by M. Cordeaux, of Starlings collecting in a field of vetches which were going off very much in appearance one dry summer. Two of them were shot, and their stomachs were found to be crammed with insects—earwigs, some small bronze beetles, with a large mass of green aphis, which it was afterwards found were destroying the vetches. Starlings may often be seen, too, on sheep's backs, feeding on the ticks they find in the wool.

Starlings are eminently gregarious, and the enormous flocks which may be observed in spring and autumn, leave no room to wonder that our extensive orchards and buildings should be so well tenanted. They differ remarkably in their habits. Some inhabit roofs and out-buildings, and frequent the haunts of men; staying quietly in the same place all the year round; showing no wish to stray; and seeming to take no notice of their wilder congeners. Others form very large flocks, which inhabit wild and solitary places, nesting in hollow trees, and roosting in reeds, thickets, and remote woods, from which they issue in great numbers in pursuit of food, often flying long distances.

> High on the topmost branches of the elm,
> In subtle conversation sits the flock
> Of social Starlings, the withdrawing beam
> Enjoying, supperless, of hasty day.
>
> HURDIS—*Favorite Village.*

Large flocks of Starlings often perform the most curious manœuvres; they soar high in the air, fly very swiftly, and wheel suddenly about, as if in obedience to command. In the

meadows, when feeding on the ground, they advance in bodies, sometimes in a square, or at an angle; or again in a compact mass; some fifty or sixty of those in the rear will rise, fly over the rest, and alight just in front of the main body. These again will be followed by others in a similar manner; then they will all rise suddenly together, with loud clamour into the air. These well drilled obedient birds, it may be observed, evidently have sentinels of their own, for they are very difficult of approach. The House Starlings, so to speak, do not seem to associate with these military birds. They are gregarious too, but they consort with the Rooks, in whose watchfulness against danger they possess perfect confidence.

In the severe winter of 1880-1 the Starlings remaining here, suffered severely. They were so tame, when grubbing beneath the snow on the roadsides, that they allowed passers-by to come close to them, and could easily have been caught by hand.

Starlings from time immemorial have been favourite pets. In a wild state they will often imitate the cries and notes of other birds, and they may be taught to whistle particular tunes, to imitate noises, and to say many words with great distinctness. The barbarous custom of splitting their tongues, does not in any way render it more easy for them to talk as is vulgarly supposed, since the vocal vibration is formed solely in the throat, but this cruelty, does very much interfere with the comfort of the bird in taking its food.

The faculty of imitation in the Starling is very great. Shakespeare incidentally pays a tribute to their cleverness in talking:

> I'll have a Starling taught to speak
> Nothing but "Mortimer," and give it him,
> To keep his anger still in motion.
> —*1st Part Henry IV., I., 3.*

Starlings vary in their plumage, and in their glossy metallic tints of purple and green; the tips of the feathers may be white, as is usual, or yellow; some are almost black; others have white feathers in their wings; and occasionally birds are observed with large patches of white about them.

Genus—PASTOR.

PASTOR ROSEUS—Rose-coloured Pastor.

[*Rose-coloured Starling—Yarrell.*]

There is only one known instance of this bird having visited Herefordshire. The specimen is in the Hereford Museum, labelled "Garway, 1858." It was formerly in the collection of the Hereford Philosophical and Literary Institution.

[Family—Corvidæ.]
[Genus—Pyrrhocorax.]
[Pyrrhocorax graculus—Chough.]
On high cliffs in the Southern counties.

[Genus—Nucifraga.]
[Nucifraga caryocatactes—Nut-cracker.]
Yorkshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, Devonshire, and Flintshire.

Genus—GARRULUS.

GARRULUS GLANDARIUS—Jay.

What! is the Jay more precious than the Lark,
Because his feathers are more beautiful?
Shakespeare—*Taming of the Shrew IV. 3.*

The painted Jay.
Gay—*Shepherd's Walk.*

As eny Jay sche light was and jolyf.
Chaucer—*Reeve's Tale.*

This handsome bird is still very common in all the wooded districts of the county, where it is resident all the year. It has many persevering enemies: gamekeepers, gardeners, milliners, fishing-fly makers, and boyhood in general; but it is a shy, wary

bird, that keeps closely to the woods, and is thus equal to them all. Its chief food consists for the greater part of the year of worms, insects, slugs, mice, frogs, eggs, and young callow birds; and when in season, acorns, nuts, and beech mast, all of which it hides here and there, as fancy dictates. In the autumn it attacks the orchards and gardens, tempted by strawberries, cherries, plums, or peas, and there is no safety until one or two of them are shot and hung up. Silent in spring and summer, it is noisy enough at other seasons. Chaucer calls it "The Scorning Jay."

Thou janglest as a Jay.
CHAUCER—*Man of Lawes Tale.*

But Cowper, with his kind and gentle nature, says—

The Jay, the Pie, and e'en the boding Owl,
That hails the rising moon, have charms for me.

No longer scolds the saucy Jay.
HURDIS—*Village Curate.*

From Bruno's forest screams the affrighted Jay.
WORDSWORTH—*Sketches.*

The prating Jay.
QUARLES.

Thou hast a crested poll, and scutcheoned wing,
Fit for a herald of the eagle king;
But *such* a voice, I would that thou could'st sing.
"My bill has rougher work—to scream with fright,
And then when screaming will not do, to fight."
MONTGOMERY—*Birds.*

GENUS—PICA.

PICA RUSTICA—MAGPIE.

Augurs, and understood relations, have
By magot-pies, and choughs, and rooks brought forth
The secret'st man of blood.
SHAKESPEARE—*Macbeth III. 4.*

Magpies have ever been prophetic birds.

> Among the Romans, not a bird
> Without a prophecy was heard;
> Fortune of empires often hung
> On the magician Magpie's tongue;
> And every Crow was to the State
> A sure interpreter of fate.
>
> CHURCHILL—*The Ghost.*

They are, however, so plentiful in Herefordshire as almost to put auguries at defiance; yet still they say here—

> One for sorrow,
> Two for mirth,
> Three for a wedding,
> Four for a birth.

which is sometimes continued thus:

> Five for a fiddle,
> Six for a dance,
> Seven for England,
> Eight for France.

and many other Magpie portents could be named. The augury by number seems, however, to differ according to the age. In 1775, Tim Bobbin says—

> I saigh two rott'n Pynots (hong'em) that wur a sign o' bad fashin: for I heard my Gronny say, hood as lief o' seen two owd harries, as two Pynots.

> And Magpies that chattered, no omen so black,
> Odd Crows that are constantly fix'd in my track,
> Plain prov'd that bad luck would betide.
>
> CLARE—*Disappointment.*

Magpies have many enemies, and numbers are always to be seen on the keepers' gibbets. They are apt to suck wild ducks' eggs and other eggs when they find them, and kill young chickens, ducklings, rabbits or leverets; so a bitter war is declared against them—ungrateful man being quite forgetful that their principal food consists of worms, snails, slugs, insects, mice, rats, &c.—which probably renders them, on the whole, much more useful than injurious to agriculturists. They will eat grain, and carry off nuts and walnuts, but these thefts are slight.

The Magpie is a shy, restless, noisy bird, chattering away on the smallest occasion. The very name *Mag*-pie testifies to the bold impudent familiarity of the bird; Mag, being apparently the short

for Margaret, and *Mag*-pie being thus a sort of sister to *Jack*-daw, and *Tom*-tit. In Somersetshire, the bird is called the Chatter-mag. It is always vigilant, and when anything excites its curiosity or suspicion, as a dog, a fox, or a cat, it becomes extremely vociferous, following up the intruder very perseveringly. Waterton gives a curious instance of a notorious poacher having been captured by this tell-tale peculiarity of the Magpie.

> An impudent presuming Pye,
> Malicious, ignorant, and sly.
> CUNNINGHAM—*Thrush and Pye.*

> The Magpie chatters with delight.
> WORDSWORTH—*The Shepherd Boy.*

> From bough to bough the restless Magpie roves
> And chatters as she flies.
> GISBORNE—*Walks in the Forest.*

> The restless Pye,
> So pert and garrulous from morn to night,
> The scandal-monger prates.
> HURDIS—*Village Curate.*

Three centuries ago there seem to have been but few Magpies in Ireland. In 1578, Derricke, who wrote "The Image of Ireland," published in London in 1581, says—

> No Pies to plucke the thatche from house,
> are brede in Irishe grounde;
> But worse than Pies, the same to burne
> a thousande maie be founde.

Magpies have since become very plentiful in Ireland, without lessening the worse alternative, it is to be feared.

Pope is severe on the Magpie, but with a human one in his mind's eye—

> So have I seen in black and white,
> A prating thing, a Magpie hight,
> Majestically stalk;
> A stately worthless animal
> That plies the tongue and wags the tail,
> All flutter, pride and talk.

Magpies are easily tamed, and become lively and amusing pets. They can be taught to speak very distinctly; but they are notorious thieves of small bright objects, which they carry off and hide, more out of pure mischief, as it seems, than from any other motive.

Genus—CORVUS.

CORVUS MONEDULA—Jackdaw.

There is a bird, who, by his coat,
And by the hoarseness of his note,
Might be supposed a Crow;
A great frequenter of the church,
Where bishop-like he finds a perch
And dormitory too.
Cowper—*Jackdaw.*

The Daw is a most familiar bird. He seems to consider himself a part of the human community amongst which he is so fond of dwelling. He is more bold and more domestic than the Rook. There is scarcely a church tower in the county which is not tenanted by a colony of Jackdaws.

The steeple loving Daw.
Hurdis—*Favorite Village.*

The Daws throng on the steeple perch,
Ambitious of its loftiest vane.
Hurdis—*Favorite Village.*

On old castle walls, in chimneys of houses, on cliffs and in hollow trees, the Jackdaw is sure to take up his residence. The young birds are thus easily procured, and they are easily reared. They become most amusing pets in the family, from the pert impudence they so quickly assume. "Jack" takes his place in the household, as if it naturally belonged to him; and is ready to enter into conversation from time to time with his short interjectional note. Indeed, if you teach him, he will imitate the human and other voices about the house. It may soon be said of him:—

In and out
Through the motley rout
That little Jackdaw kept hopping about,
Here and there,
Like a dog in a fair.

He generally contrives, moreover, to do some mischief or other, in the most secret and unexpected way. He is a great thief; will run off with, and hide, anything that attracts his fancy—and

When nobody's dreaming of any such thing,
That little Jackdaw hops off with the ring.
Ingoldsby—*The Jackdaw of Rheims.*

The Rev. F. T. Havergal mentions a tame Jackdaw at Upton Bishop, that accompanies the children of one of his parishioners to school every day, a distance of nearly a mile. The bird remains near the school-house, and at twelve o'clock may be seen on the window-sill outside the room, strutting up and down, pecking at the window, and uttering a sharp note to remind those within that work should finish. It shows great pleasure when its little friends appear, and hops on in front of them all the way home; returning in the same manner for the afternoon school. Having on one occasion accompanied the children to the Vicarage to fetch some milk, it now constantly extends its daily walk to the house to enjoy the bread and milk placed ready for it.

Daws are omnivorous birds: they usually live on worms, insects, snails, grubs, and beetles, but they are ready for anything, from carrion to fruit and vegetables. They attack eggs of all sorts whenever they can get them, and young birds too; like the Starling, they often take a ride on the back of a sheep, or cow, for the insects they can find there. They will rob the garden of nuts, walnuts, cherries, or plums; and in winter are ready to share with the Sparrows the bread-crumbs of the charitable. The Cathedral Daws will even take bread from the window sills of the Free Library, and carry it off to the nearest pinnacle to enjoy at leisure.

Jackdaws are so numerous in the old oaks of some of our parks, that the eggs are sent in by the keepers as a breakfast delicacy. If a tree is decayed the Daws will quickly find it out and nest there.

The Rev. W. Baskerville Mynors states that there is at this time (1884) a pied Jackdaw, marked very much like a Magpie, amongst the colony which inhabits the church tower at Llanwarne.

The Jackdaw, like the rest of his tribe, has been celebrated from the earliest times for longevity:

> Nine generations doth the chattering Daw,
> Of men at prime of life, surpass in years;
> This space the stag quadruples, and three stags,
> Ere he grows old, the raven doth outlive.
>
> HESIOD—*Frag. 106, trans. by Rev. H. W. Phillott.*

CORVUS CORONE—Carrion Crow.

Heigho! the Carrion Crow.
Old Ballad.

The Carrion Crow is a sexton bold,
He raketh the dead from out of the mould.
Caw! Caw! the Carrion Crow.
Ainsworth.

The preditious Crow!
Quarles.

The toil more grateful as the task more low;
So carrion is the quarry of the Crow.
Mallet—*Verbal Criticism.*

The Black, or Carrion Crow, is one of the most heinous of feathered offenders. Nothing comes amiss to him. He lives almost exclusively on animal matter, from the grubs of insects, to the carcass of a quadruped. He thrives on the refuse of the land and the water; dead, or drowned animals, fish, and offal of every kind. He will even attack living animals when young, or weak; young lambs, leverets, rabbits, moles, rats, mice, ducklings, chickens, or game of any kind. He is remarkably fond of eggs, and will deliberately beat the moors and fields for the eggs of grouse, partridges, or pheasants. The Crow thus makes for himself enemies on all sides, and yet so great is his sagacity, that in wild and wooded districts he is able to defy them all. Traps are nearly useless, but poisoned eggs and poisoned meat are very fatal to him.

The Crow is very common throughout Herefordshire, and very abundant in the wilder portions of the county. They frequently nest within a mile of the city, escaping often no doubt from their resemblance to Rooks. One noticeable point about the habits of the Crow is, that he is seldom seen alone. He seems to be so, as he sits on the bare bough of an oak peering round on all sides; but his faithful partner is not far off; and erelong she appears. Buffon says the Carrion Crows divide the country into districts of about a quarter of a league, and that each pair maintains its own rights and does not allow another pair to build within its territory.

The Crows perched on the murrain'd cattle.
Shelley.

And Crows on eager wings,
To tear the flesh of captains,
And peck the eyes of kings.
MACAULAY—*Lake Regillus.*

From the earliest times auguries have been drawn from Crows. Virgil notices a Crow on the left hand as a sign of good luck.

Ante sinistra cavâ monuisset ab ilice cornix.
Ec. ix., 15.

And when two or more are seen by a newly married couple it is stated by Fosbrook as a sign of good luck (and Crows include Rooks here, ladies!); but its croaking at all times was of evil omen.—(*Antiquities*, p. 1024).

Is it not ominous in all countries
When Crows and Ravens croak in trees?
BUTLER—*Hudibras.*

If the old shower-foretelling Crow
Croak not her boding note in vain,
To-morrow's eastern storm shall strow
The woods with leaves, with weeds the main.
FRANCIS HORACE—*Ode XVII.*

The Crow has had a bad character from a remote period. The old border ballad, "The Twa Corbies," said to date from the sixteenth century, supposes two Crows in conversation.

. . . .
The t'ane unto t'other did say,
Where sall we gang and dine to-day.
. . . .
In behint yon old feil dyke
I wot there lies a new-slain knight.
. . . .
Ye'll sit on his white hause-bain,
And I'll pick out his bonny blue een;
Wi ae lock o' his gowden hair
We'll theek our nest when it grows bare.
. . . .

The imaginary conversation between the Crows in this ballad, and also in a similar old one, that of "The three Ravens," may possibly have given rise to the nursery imitation of crow language, often given by old nurses to amuse Herefordshire children. The first Crow comes flying home in a hurry, crying out "Dead horse," "Dead horse." His mate at home says, "Whar?" "Whar?" and when the first Crow has answered "Down at Monkmoor," "Down

at Monkmoor," away they both fly together. At Leominster the answer is "Portley-moor Lane," "Portley-moor Lane," being a place about two miles from the town.

The Crow, however, is not so black in character as he is painted. When they are not so numerous as to make food scarce, they do little injury to man. For nine or ten months in the year, as Waterton observes, they are very active for his benefit by the consumption of large quantities of noxious larvæ. They destroy also numbers of mice and rats, and act generally as scavengers of the district in devouring the flesh of dead animals that would otherwise pollute the air.

> The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
> And Crows are fatted with the murrain flock.
> SHAKESPEARE—*Mid. Sum. Night's Dream, II., 1.*

In hieroglyphics a Crow symbolises contention, discord, or strife, though here it may mean equally a Raven, or a Rook. In Howell's Proverbs (1659) it is said that children of distinction among the Greeks and Romans had birds for their amusements, and in their quarrels used to pluck or pull the feathers from each other's pets; and that hence has arisen the terms of "plucking a Crow" for disputes about trifles. A "Crow to pick" is an explanation to demand, or a disagreeable matter to settle:—

> If you dispute, we must even pluck a Crow about it.
> *L'Estrange.*

> If not, resolve before you go
> That you and I must pluck a Crow.
> BUTLER—*Hudibras.*

> We'll pull that old Crow, my father.
> DEKKER—"*Honest Woman*" (1630).

With country folk the Crow is sometimes used as a symbol of independence. A Herefordshire servant girl who had a good place and was doing well, sent a message to her companion not to be in too great a hurry to get out, for "service was not all golden Crows." "A regular Crow," in the slang dictionary, is equivalent to "a fluke," and means a stroke of good luck; and "a Crow" means, also, the man who watches whilst his companion

commits a theft. The "Crow stone" is the top stone of the gable, and a "Crow-bar" is a thing of weight and influence. Things that closely resemble each other are, says Butler,

as like as Crow to Crow
BUTLER—*Hudibras.*

Crows have a history, too. In Henry VIII's day special Acts of Parliament were passed for their destruction. In Queen Elizabeth's time, every parish had to provide a Crow net to catch them; and a price has often been set upon their heads. These, and divers other matters of interesting Crow-lore, will reward the search of the persevering investigator, but he must ever bear in mind that Crows, Rooks, and Ravens, are apt all to be confused together by old writers under the much abused name of "Crow;" just as under the name of "Sparrow," whole tribes of little birds were included, and involved in one indiscriminate massacre, as the churchwarden's accounts of some country parishes bear witness.

CORVUS CORNIX—HOODED CROW.

The Grey, Hooded, or Royston Crow, is an occasional visitor to Herefordshire. Mr. Lingwood says in his Notes, "Llanwarne, January, 1850. Perrystone, February, 1860." One was observed at Letton in 1879 feeding on a dead salmon on the river bank; and another was shot at Clehonger in 1881; Mr. Elwes, the bird stuffer, at Ross, had a specimen sent him from the Marcle district; and Mr. W. Edwards, of Great Malvern, has another specimen which was shot at Eastnor.

Yarrell thinks the Hooded Crow is but a variety of the Carrion Crow, since they freely interbreed with each other; though they differ in colour, in the range of their appearance, and to some slight extent also in their habits.

CORVUS FRUGILEGUS—Rook.

The Rooks with busy claw
Foraging for sticks and straw.
KEATS—*Fancy.*

Lofty elms and venerable oaks
Invite the Rook, who, high amid the boughs,
In early spring his airy city builds,
And ceaseless, caws amusive.
THOMSON—*Spring.*

The Rook is a thoroughly gregarious bird. At all seasons of the year Rooks flock together; and their sociability may be said to be also indicated, by the constant preference they show for the close neighbourhood of mankind. Rookeries abound in Herefordshire; not only in the towns and villages; by detached farm houses, and farm buildings; but also very frequently in the middle of large woods, or occupying a small cluster of trees, away from human vicinity. In the Cathedral Close in the centre of Hereford, the elms are occupied at this time (1884) by a colony of thirty-six nests; and on those in the Castle Green there are now fifty-four nests; on Aylstone Hill there are but three nests this year; but within a short distance of the city are numerous other rookeries more or less large.

In many cases Rooks each year desert the trees in which they build, and roost for the autumn and winter months in other chosen haunts, generally more sheltered spots in deep woods, returning to the rookery in the spring. They have been noticed, however, to visit the rookery occasionally, as if to see that the nests were safe and unmolested.

The cawing Rooks alone
Maintain the song of life,
And prate amid the elms,
With harsh, rough, colloquy.
A music in itself,
Or, if not music, joy.
MACKAY—*Lullingsworth.*

The Rook sits high when the blast sweeps by,
Right pleased with his wild see-saw;
And though hollow and bleak, be the fierce wind's shriek,
It is mocked by his loud caw-caw.
* * * * * *
Oh! the merriest bird, the woods e'er saw,
Is the sable Rook with his loud caw-caw.
ELIZA COOK—*The Rook.*

A volume might be written on the instinct and habits of Rooks, their intelligence, their prejudices, and their mode of government, as shown by a close study of their proceedings. It must suffice, however, now, simply to arraign their character, and endeavour to show, whether they are beneficial or injurious to mankind. The interest and pleasure afforded by a rookery far outweighs any injury they may be supposed to do to the trees, or to persons walking beneath them ; and the inquiry, therefore, confines itself to the food they eat, and their dealings with agriculture.

M. Prevost from the examination of the crops of many birds killed at all seasons of the year, gives the following result of his observations as to the food of the Rook : "January, field mice and grubs of cockchafers ; February, the same, with red worms; March, larvæ of insects and chrysalides; April, slugs, worms, and chrysalides; May, beetles, larvæ, prawns, and wire-worms; June, cockchafers, eggs of birds and wood-boring beetles ; July, young birds, beetles, &c.; August, birds, field mice, weevils, grasshoppers, crickets, &c.; September, grubs and worms ; October, grasshoppers, ground beetles and young animals ; November, young rabbits, different insects and grubs ; December, different animals and decaying substances." M. Prevost clearly respected the Rooks during the breeding season, or he would certainly have detected the corn with which they are so fond of feeding their young ones ; and the rabbit named in the catalogue too was probably an exceptional article of diet.

The food of the Rook will vary according to the season. In dry weather when slugs, snails, and worms are scarce, they will take any eggs they can meet with, whether of ducks, poultry, game, or even those of small birds. It is equally ready for its share of carrion, from a dead mouse or rat, to the body of a sheep or horse. In the spring it takes the seed corn freely ; it will also take the ripe corn from the sheaves, and sometimes potatoes when newly planted or when the young potatoes are formed. The Rook will also eat acorns, walnuts, beechmast, and wild berries ; and in dry weather, too, it will take

cherries, plums, apples, and pears. It is very fond of walnuts, and when its mind is set that way will soon clear the trees if not prevented. Nothing, however, will save the walnuts, or potatoes if once set upon—for the Rook is most determined in his perseverance—but the sacrifice of a victim or two at the very early dawn of day, and this will require much cunning for

> Their dangers well the wary plunderers know,
> And place a watch on some conspicuous bough.

In hard, frosty weather, which is often felt very severely by Rooks, they will eat turnips, but never when they can get the animal food, which is so much more to their taste.

Rooks have been accused of injuring pastures, but if they pluck up the grass, it is only to get at the worms, slugs, and cockchafer-caterpillars concealed by it. These they seem to detect intuitively, and thus instead of doing injury to grass land, they do real service there by destroying millions of these grubs.

Considering therefore that the attacks of Rooks upon potatoes, fruit and vegetables, are only exceptional, the main charge against them is that of eating the spring-sown corn and the ripe corn, and the verdict on these counts must unhesitatingly be "guilty!" Yet how light and trifling is this injury, as compared with the very great benefit derived from them by their wholesale destruction of grubs, caterpillars and wireworms, all through the year.

Jesse, the naturalist, has well observed, that if ploughing and sowing are going on together in the same field, the rooks will follow the ploughman and not the sower; and the truth of the observation may be confirmed every spring.

The Rooks, however, will take very freely the new sown and the ripe corn, so the fields at these times must be watched, and if one or two are shot, for two or three days in succession, and duly gibbeted, the rest will soon take themselves off to safer hunting grounds. We may well, as the old poet says, pardon the Rooks if we should censure the Pigeons.

> Dat veniam corvis, vexat censura columbas.

Once upon a time, as related by Mr. Stuart Menteath, of Closeburn, the Devonshire farmers and proprietors made war upon the Rooks, set a price upon their heads, and destroyed large numbers. In three successive years the crops failed, and they were thankful to encourage the Rooks and other insect eating birds again. A similar experiment, he also says, was tried in one of the northern counties with the same result. The well-known botanist and naturalist, Lambert, on his death bed, gave with difficulty as his last words to a relative, "Don't neglect the Rooks."

In most Rookeries the Rooks are shot annually (and very good pies the young ones make, if a beefsteak is put at the bottom of the dish). These shootings considerably check their increase in number; many perish in winter, if frost and snow should be long continued; and a very dry spring and summer are very fatal to Rooks. The grubs, worms, and slugs, on which they usually feed, do not come to the surface of the ground. The parent birds perambulate the fields, and wander by the sides of the highways in search of food. They can scarcely maintain themselves, and many nests of young birds perish from starvation. The poor birds are at such times dangerous to young birds of all kinds, and to young rabbits, which they seize to save themselves from starvation. In such seasons, when moles cannot burrow in the hard ground, they also are killed in great numbers by Rooks, as well as Crows. There is one mode in which numbers of Rooks are often destroyed in the most cruel way. The spring corn is sometimes dressed with a solution of strychnine to preserve it from disease, and when the birds take it, the result is most painful to witness. The ground is strewn with the dead and dying. As many as 150 or even 200 have been seen lying in a single small field, and in addition to these, many only reach the rookery to drop down dead beneath the trees. The agony of death from the terrible spasms of strychnine is fearful to contemplate, and when, too, the numerous young birds left to die in the nests from starvation are thought of, the man who can look on unmoved at such a result—it may be of thoughtlessness—is not to be envied—

For evil is wrought by want of thought,
As well as want of heart.
HOOD.

There are much better and much cheaper remedies than strychnine, for the protection of seed corn from fungus disease; for example, a solution of copperas, or of carbolic acid, which can be got from any druggist; and these, too—especially the latter—will protect the corn from the Rooks themselves, as well as from blight and smut. In the name, then, of self-interest, as well as of humanity, let the safer dressing be used.

Rooks sometimes amuse themselves by soaring high in the air, and dropping suddenly down on each other, playing at "break-neck," boys call it.

Behold the Rooks, how odd their flight,
They imitate the gliding Kite,
And seem precipitate to fall,
As if they felt the piercing ball.

In common country belief, this game of theirs indicates the approach of wet and stormy weather.

Rooks are sometimes observed to be perfectly white, albinos, though generally they have only some white feathers about them. The Rev. Thomas Woodhouse observed two so white that he at first sight took them for Pigeons, though feeding and consorting with their sable fellows.

Rooks, like all their kind, are long-lived birds, and the experience of age may give them command.

Never tho' my mortal summer to such length of years should come,
As the many winter'd Crow that leads the clanging rookery home.
TENNYSON—*Locksley Hall.*

The straight flight of the Rooks to the woods they roost in, has given rise to the proverb, "As the Crow flies," to indicate the shortest distance between two places by an imaginary straight line. The same evening flight forms one of the closing objects of notice on an English summer evening. Many of our poets, besides Shakespeare, make allusion to the flight of Rooks to their roosting trees.

I love to hear
The silent Rook to the high wood make way
With rustling wing.
HURDIS—*Tears of affection.*

And out of town and valley came a noise
As of a broad brook o'er a shingly bed
Brawling, or like the clamour of the Rooks
At distance, ere they settle for the night.
TENNYSON—*Enid.*

A blackening train
Of clamorous Rooks thick urge their weary flight,
And seek the closing shelter of the grove.
THOMSON—*Winter.*

Light thickens ; and the Crow
Makes wing to the rooky wood :
Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,
Whiles night's black agents to their preys do rouse.
SHAKESPEARE—*Macbeth III., 2.*

What time the Rook
With whisp'ring wing brushes the midway air,
To the high wood impatient to return.
HURDIS—*Tears of affection.*

Devenere locos lætos, et amœna vireta
Fortunatorum nemorum, sedesque beatos ?
VIRGIL—*Œneid VI., 638.*

And down they came upon the happy haunts,
The pleasant greenery of the favour'd groves,
Their blissful resting place.
REV. THOS. WOODHOUSE—*Trans.*

E pastu decedens agmine magno
Corvorum increpuit densis exercitus alis.
VIRGIL—*Geo. I., 382.*

Huge flocks of rising Rooks forsake their food,
And crying seek the shelter of the wood.
DRYDEN.

When the last Rook
Beats its straight path along the dusky air
Homewards, I bless it.
COLERIDGE—*Lime Tree Bower.*

This pretty anonymous description of the close of a summer's day, must be the last illustration :—

Hark to the booming evening gun,
Whose roar proclaims the day is done.
The hay-wain there, with its tinkling team,
In the twilight fades like a fading dream ;
One after one, the stars shine out,
Owl answers owl, with hooting shout,
And darkness comes with the moaning breeze,
As the last of the Rooks settle down in their trees.

CORVUS CORAX—Raven.

There were three Ravens sat on a tree,
Down a down, hey down, hey down.
—*Old Song.*

Denmark's grim Raven.
Scott—*Marmion.*

The Raven is a fine powerful bird, bold and sagacious, with a quick eye, and probably a keen scent. It is not uncommon in the more wild and hilly districts of Herefordshire. In the neighbourhood of the Black Mountains, and in the wilder districts of the northern side of the county, it is almost always to be seen and heard, though its numbers are gradually becoming less from the poisoned baits of the shepherd and the gamekeeper. The Raven builds still in the Cwmyoy Rocks, and in the Darrens of the Black Mountains. "When I first knew the Tarren Esgob in the Llanthony Valley," says Mr. Ley, "two pairs of Ravens built there, but of late years only one pair, and I never knew more than a single pair to breed at Cwmyoy." A pair built there this year (1884) and reared their young ones. Two Ravens flew by the Vicarage at Longtown in 1883, which were seen and heard by the Rev. C. L. Eagles. This gentleman, some years since on turning a corner of the mountain, shot one which measured 3 feet 3 inches from tip to tip of the extended wings. He states that they are still common in that neighbourhood. A pair of Ravens built at Stanner Rocks, near Kington, for many years. The old birds used to go away year after year with their young ones, and return alone, and if one got shot, or destroyed, the other would fly away and return with another mate, but for the last few years they have not built there. Ravens are said to have built on tall trees at Whitfield, at Croft Ambrey, at Brampton Bryan, at Wigmore Rolls, and at many other places. About fifty years since, still within the memory of the old men of the parish, a pair of Ravens built in a tall elm tree in the parish of Sellack. The tree was cut down one spring when the hen bird was sitting on her eggs. She was killed in the fall, and Ravens have never nested in the parish since.

On ancient oak, or elm, whose topmost boughs
Begin to fail, the Raven's twig-formed bower
Is built; and many a year the selfsame tree
The aged solitary pair frequent.

GRAHAME—*Birds of Scotland.*

A pair of Ravens used to build in the tall beech trees on Dinmore Hill, on the ridge opposite Hampton Court, up to within the last ten or twelve years, and every spring to the present time, Mr. J. H. Arkwright has observed the Ravens to come and soar round the district though they no longer build there.

"When I was a boy," says Mr. Ley, "Raven trees were often pointed out by old men, in my constant and vehement birds' nesting rambles, but I never once met with a nest in a tree. Is it true that they do still breed upon trees in Herefordshire"?

Ravens when not numerous do a very insignificant amount of harm, feeding themselves on rabbits, moles, or other small animals, and such carrion as they fall in with; but if at all plentiful, or other food is scarce, or when feeding their young, they become very mischievous. All weak animals, as cast or yeaning ewes, even horses or cattle, if old, or ill, or helpless in a bog, are soon attacked. The Raven strikes an eye with his powerful beak, and when the poor animal rolls in agony to rub it on the ground, the other eye is pierced, and the cruel bird flies off to return again when its victim is dead, with companions who quickly disembowel the animal; and who, if not disturbed, will never leave it till the bones are bare.

As when a greedy Raven sees
A sheep entangled by the fleece,
With hasty cruelty he flies
To attack him, and pick out his eyes.

BUTLER—*Miscellaneous Thoughts.*

Ravens have a keen sight, as well as sense of smell. A writer in the Zoologist (Vol. 1) says—"When they search in waste places for provision, they hover over them at a great height; and yet a sheep will not be dead many minutes before they find it. Nay, if a morbid smell transpires from any one of the flock, they will watch the animal for days till it dies."

The Raven is the emblem of Denmark, and the standard of the Danes. Owain is said to have had an army of 300 Ravens.

Like the Ravens of Owain, eager for prey.

The Raven is often tamed and imitates the human voice with as much exactness as the Parrot. It lives to a very great age. The old Highland proverb, slightly varying Hesiod, says :—

Thrice the life of a dog is the life of a horse ;
Thrice the life of a horse is the life of a man ;
Thrice the life of a man is the life of a stag ;
Thrice the life of a stag is the life of a Raven.

Thin is thy plumage, death is in thy croak ;
Raven, come down from that majestic oak.
—When I was hatched, my father set this tree,
An acorn then ; its fall I hope to see,
A century after thou hast ceased to be.

MONTGOMERY—*Birds.*

Its association with the cherished beliefs of many northern nations, has caused it to be regarded with awe and reverence. It is ever a bird of ill omen.

The hoarse night Raven, trumpe of doleful drere.

SPENSER.

The sad presaging Raven tolls
The sick man's passport in her hollow beak,
And in the shadow of the silent night
Doth shake contagion from the sable wing.

MARLOWE.

Ravens sung the funeral dirge.

THOMSON—*Castle of Indolence.*

A cursed bird, too crafty to be shot ;
That always cometh with his soot-black coat,
To make hearts dreary.

HOOD.

The boding Raven on her cottage sat,
And with hoarse croakings warned us of our fate.

GAY.

The Raven croaked as she sat at her meal,
And the old woman knew what he said,
And she grew pale at the Raven's tale,
And sickened and went to her bed.

SOUTHEY.

Is it not ominous in all countries
When Crows and Ravens croak upon trees ?

BUTLER—*Hudibras.*

The Raven himself is hoarse,
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements.
SHAKESPEARE—*Macbeth, 1. 5.*

Came he right now to sing a Raven's note,
Whose dismal tune bereft my vital powers;
And thinks he, that the chirping of a Wren,
By crying comfort from a hollow breast,
Can chase away the first-conceived sound?
SHAKESPEARE—*Part II., King Henry VI., III., 2.*

Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!
Quoth the Raven, "Never more."
EDGAR POE—*Ravens.*

Besides a Raven from a wither'd oak,
Left of their lodging, was observed to croak,
That omen lik'd him not.
DRYDEN—*Hind and Panther.*

Where lethal Ravens bark, and owlets wake the nyghte:
CHATTERTON—*Eclogues.*

SECTION—OSCINES SCUTELLIPLANTARES.

FAMILY—ALAUDIDÆ.

GENUS—ALAUDA.

ALAUDA ARVENSIS—SKYLARK.

Hark! Hark! the Lark at Heaven's gate sings.
SHAKESPEARE—*Cymbeline II., 3.*

O thou sweet Lark, who in the heaven so high
Twinkling thy wings dost sing so joyfully,
I watch thee soaring with a deep delight,
And when at last I turn my aching eye
That lags below thee in the Infinite,
Still in my heart receive thy melody.
SOUTHEY—*Sonnet.*

Type of the wise, who soar but never roam,
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home.
WORDSWORTH.

Lo! how the Lark soars upward and is gone;
Turning a spirit as he nears the sky,
His voice is heard, though body there is none,
And rain-like music scatters from on high.
HOOD—*Hero.*

Pois'd in air,
And warbling his wild notes about the clouds,
Almost beyond the ken of human sight,
Clapp'd to his side his plumy steerage, down
Drops; instantaneous drops, the silent Lark.
DODD—*Prison Thoughts.*

But only Lark and Nightingale forlorn,
Fill up the silences of night and morn.
HOOD—*False Poets and True.*

The Skylark is very common on the arable land throughout Herefordshire. Its numbers were much lessened by the severe winter of 1880-1, and they are still, in 1884, not restored to the usual average. The food of the Skylark consists, according to M. Prevost, chiefly of insects of various kinds, flies, beetles, grasshoppers, worms, seeds of many wild plants, and grain. In the severe frosts of winter or early spring, Skylarks sometimes do much mischief by attacking green crops, such as rape, or young cabbages in allotment gardens. Upon the whole, however, they must be considered more useful than injurious to the farmer.

The Skylark is a great favourite in captivity, and often cheers the heart of the bed-ridden by the sprightliness of its song. It keeps its health well, and seems happy and contented in its cage. To those who complain of the bird's imprisonment, Thomson has well answered, "We should not think only of the Skylark"; and Sir Francis B. Head's touching tale of "The Emigrant's Lark" well illustrates the same feeling.

The Skylark has been more noticed in prose and poetry than even the Nightingale. Grahame, in his "Birds of Scotland," has well contrasted the lowly situation of the nest with the lofty flight of its constructors:—

Thou simple bird
Of all the vocal quire, dwellest in a home
The humblest; yet thy morning song ascends
Nearest to Heaven.

And of the nest he says—

> The daisied lea he loves where tufts of grass
> Luxuriant crown the ridge; there with his mate,
> He forms their lowly house of withered bents,
> And coarsest speargrass: next, the inner work
> With finer, and still finer fibres lays,
> Rounding it curious with his speckled breast.

The following Stanza in French is successful in imitating the song of the Skylark, and describing its evolutions :—

> La gentille alouette avec son tirelire,
> Tirelire, relire et tirelire, tire
> Vers la voûte du ciel; puis son vol en ce lieu
> Vire, et semble nous dire, Adieu! Adieu!

Shakespeare describes the song of the Skylark in similar words—

> The Lark, that tirra-lirra chants.
> *Winter's Tale, Song, Act IV., 2.*

Shelley has written some excellent verses on the Skylark, commencing :—

> Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
> Bird thou never wert,
> That from the heaven, or near it,
> Pourest thy full heart
> In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.
>
> Higher still and higher,
> From the cloud thou springest,
> Like a cloud of fire
> The blue deep thou wingest,
> And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

With so wide and favourite a subject some further poetical illustrations must be given :—

> The busy Larke, the messenger of day,
> Saleweth in hire song the morne grey.
> CHAUCER—*Knight's Tale.*

> The Lark that shuns on lofty bough to build
> Her humble nest lies silent in the field.
> WALLER—*Of the Queen.*

> It was the Lark, the herald of the morn.
> SHAKESPEARE—*Romeo and Juliet, III., 5.*

> The merry Larks are ploughman's clocks.
> SHAKESPEARE—*L. L. Lost, V., 2.*

Lo! here the gentle Lark, weary of rest,
From his moist cabinet mounts up on high,
And wakes the morning, from whose silver breast
The sun ariseth in his majesty,
Who doth the world so gloriously behold,
That cedar-tops and hills seem burnish'd gold.

SHAKESPEARE—*Venus and Adonis.*

And now the herald Lark
Left his ground nest, high tow'ring to descry
The morn's approach, and greet her with his song.

MILTON—*Paradise Lost.*

A somer's Larke, that with her song doth greete
The dawning day, forth coming from the east.

SPENSER—*Astrophel.*

The Lav'rocks wake the merry morn
Aloft on dewy wing.

BURNS.

The Lark is gay
That dries his feathers, saturate with dew,
Beneath the rosy cloud; while yet the beams
Of day-spring over-shoot his humble nest.

COWPER.

When the merry Lark doth gild
With his song the summer hours.

BARRY CORNWALL—*Song for the Seasons.*

Invisible in flecked sky
The Lark sent down her revelry.

SCOTT—*Lady of the Lake.*

Up with me! up with me! into the clouds!
For thy song, Lark, is strong;
Up with me! up with me! into the clouds!
Singing, singing,
With clouds and sky about thee ringing.
Lift me, guide me, till I find
That spot which seems so to thy mind.

WORDSWORTH.

Up-springs the Lark,
Shrill-voiced and loud, the messenger of morn;
Ere yet the shadows fly, he mounted sings
Amid the dawning clouds, and from their haunts
Calls up the tuneful nations.

THOMSON—*Spring.*

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine;
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That poured forth a flood of rapture so divine.

SHELLEY.

In 1883 Mr. W. C. Blake, of Ross, had a white Skylark brought to him. It was a complete Albino variety.

ALAUDA ARBOREA—Woodlark.

While high in air, and poised upon his wings
Unseen, the soft, enamoured, Woodlark runs
Through all his maze of melody.
GILBERT WHITE.

The Thrush
And Woodlark, o'er the kind contending throng
Superior heard, run thro' the sweetest length
Of notes; when listening *Philomela* deigns
To let them joy, and purposes, in thought
Elate, to make her night excel their day.
THOMSON—*Spring.*

The Woodlark is not a frequent bird in Herefordshire, but is rather less rare in the northern and more wooded districts of the county than on its southern side. Mr. Evans knew it well in the midland district. He says of it:—"There is scarcely a day through the long dreary winter that the Woodlark may not be heard. His voice is not so loud or so varied as that of his kinsman; it does not come forth in such a flood of joy and ecstacy as that of the Skylark, but it is far dearer and sweeter, and seems to tell a tale of deeper and more tender feeling" (p. 33).

The plaintive Woodlark's strain,
Heard in the midnight sky,
As if a spirit sang unseen
To the bright stars marching by.
EVANS—*Songs of the Birds.*

The Woodlark's song, says Mr. Johns, is superior in liquidness of tone to the Skylark. As it flies from place to place, it may be represented by the syllables "Lulu, lulu," and then it alights on the summit of a lofty tree to "unthread its chaplet of musical pearls."

The Woodlark breathes in softest strain, the vow,
And love's soft burthen floats from bough to bough.
LEYDEN—*Scenes of Infancy.*

Oh stay, sweet warbling Woodlark, stay!
Nor quit for me the trembling spray.
BURNS—*The Woodlark.*

So calls the Woodlark in the grove
His little faithful mate to cheer;
At once, 'tis music, and 'tis love.
BURNS—*Banks of Cree.*

The Woodlark suffered very severely from the cruel winter of 1880-1, and is as yet more infrequent than it usually is.

[ALAUDA CRISTATA—Crested Lark.]
A rare straggler to the south coast of England.

[Genus—CALANDRELLA.]
[CALANDRELLA BRACHYDACTYLA—Short-toed Lark.]
Rare on South Coast. Once near Shrewsbury.

[Genus—MELANOCORYPHA.]
[MELANOCORYPHA CALANDRA—Calandra Lark.]
Once near Devonport; once near Exeter.

[MELANOCORYPHA SIBIRICA—White-winged Lark.]
Once near Brighton in 1862.

[Genus—OTOCORYS.]
[OTOCORYS ALPESTRIS—Shore Lark.]
Irregular winter visitor to the coasts of Great Britain.

ORDER—PICARIÆ.

GENUS—CYPSELUS.

CYPSELUS APUS—SWIFT.

Swift birds that skim o'er the stormy deep,
Who steadily onward your journey keep,
Who neither for rest nor slumber stay,
But still press forward by night or day.
ANON.

This singular bird, so sombre in colour and so peculiar in shape, is very common throughout Herefordshire. It frequents

church towers, old buildings, especially if lofty, and sometimes builds in cliffs. In these places it lays its eggs on such dust and refuse as it finds there. In the city of Hereford they are usually very abundant, and fly their summer evening races in the precincts of the Cathedral with noisy rapidity, uttering their peculiar squealing note, "Swee-ree, swee-ree," with much energy. The power of flight the Swift possesses is very astonishing. Gilbert White likened it to the swiftness of a meteor. Its body is very heavy as compared with its size, and it therefore seems to bear out the assertion of the Duke of Argyle, "that the heavier in proportion a bird is, the greater is its power and velocity of flight."

Swifts are not easily able to rise from the ground, unless they meet with some inequality on its surface, in consequence of the small size of their legs, which are stout and strong, though short. They serve them not only to cling to walls, but also as a means of defence after the manner of Hawks and Owls. The beak is too soft to be used to peck, but their sharp claws will penetrate tender skin.

Why ever on the wing, or perched elate?
—Because I fell not from my first estate;
This is my charter to the boundless skies,—
"Stoop not to earth, on pain no more to rise."

MONTGOMERY—*Birds.*

The Swifts come to us from Africa. They are the last of our summer visitants to arrive, and are the earliest to depart. For some cause or other, the winter of 1880-1 was very fatal to them, and the number of them is still below the ordinary average.

The screaming cry of the Swift is one of the pleasantest of summer sounds, never heard in the heat of mid-day; but in fine weather, accompanying the fading twilight of evening, and the fresh hours of morning. Cool long days are the Swift's delight, and at such times he seems to know neither rest nor weariness; but continues his headlong race for many hours together.

To mark the Swift in rapid giddy ring
Rush round the steeple, unsubdued of wing:
Amusive birds! say where your hid retreat
When the frost rages and the tempests beat;
Whence your return, by such nice instinct led,
When Spring, soft season, lifts her bloomy head?

GILBERT WHITE—*Summer's Evening Walk.*

In heraldry, the Swift is known as the Martlet.

[CYPSELUS MELBA—White-bellied Swift.]

[*Alpine Swift—Yarrell.*]

A rare straggler to England, and has occurred in Ireland.

[Genus—ACANTHYLLIS.]

[ACANTHYLLIS CAUDACUTA—Needle-tailed Swift.]

Near Colchester, Essex, 1846; and Ringwood, Hants, 1879.

FAMILY—CAPRIMULGIDÆ.

GENUS—CAPRIMULGUS.

CAPRIMULGUS EUROPÆUS—NIGHTJAR.

The Nightjar, or Fern Owl as it is more commonly called in Herefordshire, so sober in colour, so exquisite in the markings of its plumage, so singular in its habits and its note, is not infrequent in the northern and western districts of the county, but is comparatively rare elsewhere. It delights in high, stony hills in the neighbourhood of large patches of the common brake, as well as in woods and plantations; particularly in woods of oak. The constant repetition of the jarring note of the cock bird, heard in the dusk of the evening, will more often make its presence known than the sight of the bird itself.

> By the lingering light I scarce discern,
> The shrieking Nightjar sail on heavy wing.
> CHARLOTTE SMITH—*Sonnet.*

The rich, but quiet colour of finely mottled grey and brown, resembling very closely the moths it is so fond of, and its nocturnal habits, tend to conceal it from observation. On the excursion of the Woolhope Club to Brampton Bryan Park, June 29th, 1882, a Nightjar was found just caught in one of the keeper's destructive pole traps. In the neighbourhood of Ledbury, of Ludlow, of Aymestrey, and of Kington, at Foxley, Garnstone, and at Moccas its jarring

cry may often be heard. On the Woolhope Hills, and in Haywood Forest, it is also to be heard in some seasons. Its numbers vary in different years, but it seems to have become less frequent than it was formerly. The true explanation has yet to be given of the use of the serrated claw of the middle toe of the Nightjar.

Wordsworth, who knew the Nightjar well, and had every opportunity of observing its habits, notices that the Dor-hawk, as it is in the North locally called, utters its cry on the wing, and says,

> The busy Dor-hawk chases the white moth
> With burring note.

And again,

> The burring Dor-hawk round and round is wheeling,
> That solitary bird
> Is all that can be heard
> In silence deeper far, than deepest noon.

Gilbert White says of it—

> While o'er the cliff th' awaken'd Churn Owl hung,
> Through the still gloom protracts his chattering song.

[CAPRIMULGUS RUFICOLLIS—Red-necked Nightjar.]
Once in Great Britain in 1862.

FAMILY—PICIDÆ.

GENUS—PICUS.

PICUS MARTIUS—GREAT BLACK WOODPECKER.

The admission of the Great Black Woodpecker into the avifauna of Britain is considered doubtful in the "Ibis Catalogue of British Birds" (1883).

Yarrell declines it altogether, and it is adversely bracketed.

There can be no doubt, however, of its having been observed on several occasions in Herefordshire. Captain Mayne Reid saw two specimens in the woods near his residence at Frogmore, Ross, and noted the occurrence in the *Live Stock Journal*. The Rev.

Clement Ley saw the Great Black Woodpecker at Ruckhall Wood, Eaton Bishop, about the year 1874, and pointed it out to his cousin, Mr. Edward Du Buisson, who also saw it there. On writing to Mr. Ley on the subject, he replies that "he has not the least doubt about it," and he says "that besides this instance he has on two or three occasions heard the note of this bird in the neighbourhood of Ross, without being able to get a sight of it." "The secret of meeting with rare birds in England," Mr. Ley adds, "is to be found in familiarising oneself with their notes in countries where they are more common. Thus, by learning the note of the Great Black Woodpecker on the continent, I have met with this bird on several occasions in England. The note resembles the 'chuck, chuck' of the Great Spotted Woodpecker, but it is much louder and more harsh, and is generally uttered at intervals of from ten to sixty seconds. The last occasion on which I heard it was in 1876, at Mount Edgecombe, in Devonshire, when standing with my daughter close to a thick oak coppice, and waiting for a few minutes, we got a fine view of the bird."

The note is said by some observers to remind the hearer of a loud hoarse unearthly laugh.

Mr. D. R. Chapman also saw the Great Black Woodpecker at Belmont (about a mile from where Mr. Ley and Mr. Du Buisson had seen it, as already noticed)—in the spring of 1879. His attention was called to it by his son, as it flew from a copse to a tree standing in open ground. To make sure of the species, he crawled along the meadow for some sixty or seventy yards, and was rewarded by a clear view of the bird.

The Great Black Woodpecker is familiarly called by the Norwegians, Gertrude's Bird. Thorpe gives the legend as follows :— "Our Lord in His wanderings on earth, accompanied by Saint Peter, came to a woman who wore a red hood on her head, who was engaged in baking. The wanderers were weary and hungry ; and our Lord begged the woman, whose name was Gertrude, to give Him a cake. She took a little dough, and set it on to bake,

but little as it was when it was set on, it soon filled the whole pan. Thinking this too much for alms, she took a smaller quantity, and again began to bake; but this also grew as large as the first. Gertrude then took still less dough, but this cake, too, swelled until it was as large as the others. Then said the woman, 'you must go without alms, for all my bakings are too large for you!' Then was our Lord wroth, and said unto Gertrude, 'because thou gavest me nothing, thou shalt, for punishment, become a bird. Thou shalt seek thy dry food between the wood and the bark, and drink only when it rains.' The words were no sooner spoken than the woman was transformed into the 'Gertrude Bird,' and flew away through the kitchen chimney. And to this day she is seen with a red hood and a black body, coloured by the chimney soot."

FRAZER'S *Magazine*, 1858.

GENUS—DENDROCOPUS.

DENDROCOPUS VILLOSUS—HAIRY WOODPECKER.

This bird, also, is put in a parenthesis by the Committee of the British Ornithologists Union, and there it must be left. There is a specimen in the Hereford Musuem, labelled "Garway 1845," but unfortunately it has no history connected with it.

[DENDROCOPUS PUBESCENS—Downy Woodpecker.]

In Dorsetshire in December, 1836.

DENDROCOPUS MAJOR—GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER.

The busy Woodpecker
Made stiller by her sound
The inviolable quietness.

SHELLEY—*Recollection.*

This Woodpecker, though nowhere numerous, is yet not rare in the oak woods and orchards of Herefordshire. It keeps very much out of sight in the higher branches of trees, and is probably

therefore more numerous than is generally supposed. To those who are familiar with bird notes, the "gick, gick, gick," of the Pied Woodpecker, as it is sometimes called, will not infrequently be heard. Selby's view in 1883 is greatly confirmed. He believed that they are migratory from some of the more northern parts of Europe—perhaps Norway and Sweden. They arrive about the same time as the Woodcock and other equatorial migrants, and generally after stormy weather from the north or north-east.

DENDROCOPUS MINOR—Lesser Spotted Woodpecker.

The Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, though not abundant in Herefordshire, is yet not a rare bird, and it is one widely distributed throughout the county. It is probably more abundant than is generally supposed, for it is a quiet, shy little bird, fond of tall trees, and instantly conceals itself on the side most distant from the intruder. Its cry is often mistaken for that of the Wryneck, which it resembles, except that it is all on one note, whereas that of the Wryneck rises in the musical scale. Many of these pretty little birds were killed by the severe winter of 1880-1, but in several instances on the outskirts of the city, and in other places in the county, they joined the motley group, which at that time owed their lives to the charity of those who did not forget to feed them in their distress.

A lady at Shobdon, who had a number of little pensioners for her bounty during a hard frost, was rewarded by the presence of one of these pretty lively little birds, which came to her window-sill for several months, to feed on the crumbs and scraps so thoughtfully provided.

The Lesser Spotted Woodpecker generally chooses a broken off branch to perforate for its nest; from one to two feet from the end it bores the hole on the under side, which extends about a

foot down the branch, and is enlarged for the nest. Its locality may be readily found by the chips beneath the tree, and they are thus distinguished from similar holes bored by the Marsh Tit, who cunningly has the prudence to carry its chips away. A pair of these pretty little birds used to visit the garden of Harley House, in the centre of the city of Hereford, every spring, until the special apple tree (an Irish Peach Apple) to which it took a fancy, and in which it bored a nest hole, unfortunately died.

[Genus—Picoïdes.]

[Picoïdes Tridactylus—European Three-toed Woodpecker.]

Once shot in Scotland, 1820, Donovan.

Genus—GECINUS.

GECINUS VIRIDIS—Green Woodpecker.

Every leaf was at rest, and I heard not a sound
But the Woodpecker tapping the hollow beech trees.
Moore—*Stanzas.*

An echo, like a ghostly Woodpecker.
Tennyson—*Princess.*

This fine, handsome bird is commonly called the "Hickle" in Herefordshire, from the quick repetition of this word in its wild laughing cry. It is also called by some the "Storm Fowl" or "Rain Bird," and unquestionably it does utter its cry more frequently between thunder showers than at other times. Gilbert White and many others have compared its note to the sound of laughter, and hence, too, it has got the name of "Yaffil."

The Skylark in ecstasy sang from a cloud,
And Chanticleer crow'd, and the Yaffil laughed loud.
—*The Peacock at Home.*

Now we hear
The Golden Woodpecker, who like a fool,
Laughs loud at nothing.
Hurdis—*Village Curate.*

The Woodweele sang, and wold not cease,
Sitting upon the spraye,
Soe lowde he wakened Robin Hood
In the greenwood where he lay.
Percy's Reliques—*Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne.*

The Green Woodpecker is very common in Herefordshire, and he usually forms an object of interest and admiration, in every walk through the wooded districts of the county. He builds more frequently in the ash, or apple tree, than in the beech, and his nest is often shown by the chips lying beneath, and at the foot of the tree. His food consists of spiders, ants and their eggs, timber haunting beetles, chrysalides, slugs, worms, and grubs of all kinds. It will also sometimes take corn, oats, barley, or acorns. Bechstein states that it eats nuts and meat in confinement.

> And Woodpeckers explore the sides
> Of rugged oaks for worms.
>
> COWPER—*On a Mischievous Bull.*

> Rap, rap, rap, rap, I hear thy knocking bill,
> Then thy strange outcry when the woods are still,
> "Thus am I ever labouring for my bread,
> And thus give thanks to find my table spread."
>
> MONTGOMERY—*Birds.*

[Genus—COLAPTES.]

[COLAPTES AURATUS—Golden-winged Woodpecker.]

Amesbury, Wiltshire, in 1836.

GENUS—IŸNX.

IŸNX TORQUILLA—WRYNECK.

A regular summer visitant to Herefordshire, and pretty generally distributed throughout the county, but varying in numbers. It arrives usually a little before or with the Cuckoo, and hence gets the name of "Cuckoo's Mate." It is a solitary bird in its habits, rarely associating even with its own mate, and is no great climber, though it has the Woodpecker's foot, with two toes before and two behind. During the spring months its monotonous cry of "Que, que, que," many times rapidly repeated, rather like that of the Kestrel, draws attention to it, and if carefully approached the bird may be seen perched on the branch of a tree. The Wryneck builds in the hole of a tree, and may easily be caught there, if the

boy is not afraid of the loud hissing noise it sets up, and the wonderful way it has of rolling its head as if to imitate a snake. It has been called the "Snake Bird" for this reason.

Mr. Ley has known as many as forty eggs taken one by one from a single nest of the Wryneck.

Sub-order—ANISODACTYLÆ.

Family—ALCEDINIDÆ.

Genus—ALCEDO.

ALCEDO ISPIDA—Kingfisher.

And the Halcyon was there in her boddice of blue.
—*The Peacock at Home.*

Why dost thou hide thy beauty from the sun?
"The eye of man, but not of heaven I shun."
Montgomery—*Birds.*

This beautiful bird is by no means uncommon in Herefordshire. It is to be found on all the large streams of the county, and in many of the small tributary brooks. Its brilliant plumage is a dangerous attraction, and creates for it many enemies. It is shot to be stuffed and put in a glass case; to make ornaments for ladies' hats or muffs (as the ridiculous fashion now goes); to afford feathers for artificial fly makers; to be used as a charm for good luck; as a safeguard against thunder; or even to show which way the wind blows. The gamekeeper and water bailiff must also be regarded as great enemies to the Kingfisher, in the belief that it lives on young trout and lastspring.

The shy, solitary habits of the Kingfisher, and its quick, rapid flight often save it from destruction; and the license now necessary for carrying a gun also affords it an additional protection.

Then came
Swift as a meteor's shining flame,
A Kingfisher from out the brake,
And almost seemed to leave a wake
Of brilliant hues behind.

FABER—*The Cherwell.*

The food of the Kingfisher consists chiefly, no doubt, of little fishes, but they are principally minnows. It eats sticklebacks, young gudgeons, dace, miller's thumbs, or battle heads, and sometimes trout and lastspring; it takes also small crustaceans, water shrimps, and beetles, with other aquatic insects; and it has been seen to take leeches. An instance is given in the Woolhope Transactions for 1869 (p. 76) of a Kingfisher being choked in the attempt to swallow a small perch, which set up its back spring fin, and killed its own destroyer by sticking in his throat.

The nest of the Kingfisher is always placed in a bank in a hole made by the bird. It is usually in some river bank, but it is occasionally found in banks of earth at some distance from the water. The description of a nest is given in the Woolhope Transactions for 1869 (p. 38). The hole here was in a perpendicular bank, six feet above the ordinary water level. The entrance was oval in shape, two inches and three-quarters perpendicularly, and two inches and a half in its horizontal diameter. It was placed about a foot below the surface, was two feet in length, and inclined upwards to within two inches of the surface. Here a wider space, some six inches in diameter, was hollowed out for the nest of fish bones. The Rev. Clement Ley, than whom few people have found more nests of the Kingfisher, says the holes are invariably bored by the bird. They are always nearly, if not quite, straight, always greater in height than width at the entrance, always with an upward incline, and are utterly unmistakable. Mr. Ley has examined a great number of nests, in order to settle the old question, whether the Kingfisher actually constructs a nest of fish bones, or whether the bones with which the eggs are found surrounded, are merely an accidental accumulation of the indigestible portions of food, which, like the Owl and some other birds, the Kingfisher disgorges. The

fish bones were arranged in a similar manner in all the holes examined, and in a particularly neat and careful manner in those cases where the parent birds had only commenced laying; and in some holes examined, in which only two or three eggs had been deposited, the circle of fish bones was found complete, though in nests examined later, there was certainly a greater accumulation. (Woolhope Trans. 1869, p. 76.)

The nest of the Kingfisher is often discovered by a dog scenting its "ancient fish-like smell," through the soil; and the nest hunters may be equally assured of its presence from the same smell at the entrance of the hole. It becomes very offensive before the young birds leave it, and the same offensive smell indeed attaches itself to the brilliant feathers of the bird.

Many ancient fables are told with reference to the Halcyon, which cannot well be the Kingfisher, although called by that name. The classical story is, that Alcyone, or Halcyone, the daughter of Œolus, the god of winds and storms, married Ceyx, who was drowned when going to Claros to consult the oracle. Halcyone, finding his body on the sea shore, threw herself into the sea. Both were changed into birds of the same name, and under the influence of Œolus, the waters are kept calm and serene while they build and sit on their nests.

> Perque dies placidos hiberno tempore septem
> Incubat Halcyone, pendentibus æquore nidis
> Tum via tuta maris : ventos custodit et arcet
> Œolus egressu.
>
> OVID—*Met. XI., 745.*

> Seven tranquil days upon her floating nest
> She sits; while winds and waters are at rest,
> The gales are kept in durance by their king
> Unwilling captives.
>
> Trans.—REV. THOS. WOODHOUSE.

Plautus makes one of his characters in Pœnulus, so upset by the rough reception he meets with, that he says, speaking of it; "Well, you are done for; at any rate, unless you make her as calm, as the sea is, when the Halcyon hatches her brood there."

PŒNULUS, I., 2.

So Dryden, in his elegy on Cromwell;

> Wars that have respect for his repose,
> As winds for Halcyons when they breed at sea.

Hence has arisen the proverbial expression of "Halcyon days," when the winds are quiet and mariners may safely put to sea.

> Blow, but gently blow, faire winde,
> From the forsaken shore,
> And be as to the Halcyon kinde,
> Till we have ferry'd o'er.
> BROWNE.

The Halcyon of the ancients was evidently a sea-bird; the Kingfisher is as certainly a bird of inland streams and secluded waters. Virgil mentions among the signs of the weather, how

> tepidum ad solem pennas in littore pandunt
> Dilectæ Thetidi alcyones.
> GEORG, 1, 393.

> Halcyons bask on the short sunny shore.
> DRYDEN.

Pliny's account of the Halcyon is altogether so extraordinary that it may be well to quote it in full, especially because it seems to be the source from which many subsequent stories about the bird are derived. He says; "The most remarkable on this account (as birds of omen) are the Halcyons. The seas, and he that sails on them, know the days when they hatch. The bird itself is a little larger than a Sparrow, of a blue colour for the most part, but with an intermixture of white and purple feathers, with a long slender neck. One kind of them is distinguished by its size and by its song. The smaller ones sing in the reed beds. It is very unusual to see a Halcyon, and never except about the setting of the Vergiliæ (the beginning of November) or at the winter Solstice: they sometimes fly round a ship and then make off at once for their hiding places. They hatch in the winter; at which time the days are called halcyon, the sea being calm and navigable all the time they last, off Sicily especially; in other parts the sea is calmer, but off Sicily quite manageable. They lay their eggs seven days before the Solstice, and hatch them seven days after. Their nests are

wonderful structures, in the shape of a ball, with the entrance a little projecting but very narrow, as in large sponges. It is impossible to cut them with a knife, but they can be broken with a sharp blow, like the dry foam of the sea. It is not known what they are made of; some think of sharp spines, for they live on fish. They also enter rivers. They lay five eggs."

In the midst of all this strange medley of fact and legend, we can see that he has confounded together two birds, the smaller one which lives in rivers, and the larger which is the legendary bird that calms the sea. It is to this last that allusions are most frequent.

Sometimes the Kingfisher is supposed to have the power of quelling storms :

> May Halcyons smooth the waves and calm the seas.
> THEOCRITUS—*Idyls VII., 57.*

Shakespeare notices the belief—

> Expect St. Martin's summer, Halcyon days.
> *King Henry VI., I., 2.*

It is asserted that when the dead bird, or its skin, is hung up by a thread, the beak will always turn to the point of the compass whence the wind blows :

> Or as Halcyon, with her turning breast
> Demonstrates wind from wind and east from west.
> STORER.

Marlow, in his play " The Jew of Malta," I., 1, says—

> But how now stands the wind,
> Into what corner peers my Halcyon's bill ?

> He breath'd his last exposed to open air,
> And here, his corpse, unbless'd, is hanging still
> To shew the change of winds with his prophetic bill.
> DRYDEN—*Hind and Panther.*

In Glamorganshire the Kingfisher is still said to be hung up by a thread for this purpose. (See Woolhope Transactions for 1869). Shakespeare also alludes to the custom when he makes Kent speak of rogues and sycophants, who

> Renege, affirm, and turn their Halcyon beaks
> With every gale and vary of their masters.
> *King Lear II., 2.*

[Genus—CERYLE.]

[CERYLE ALCYON—Belted Kingfisher.]

In Ireland, Meath, 1845, and Wicklow, 1846.

FAMILY—CORACIIDÆ.

GENUS—CORACIAS, Lin.

CORACIAS GARRULA—ROLLER.

There is a specimen of this rare straggler into Britain in the Hereford Museum, labelled "Goodrich, 1857;" but this is all that is known about it.

[Family—MEROPIDÆ.]

[Genus—MEROPS.]

[MEROPS APIASTER—Bee-eater.]

A rare straggler to England and Scotland.

[MEROPS PHILIPPINUS—Blue-tailed Bee-eater.]

Northumberland, August, 1862.

FAMILY—UPUPIDÆ.

UPUPA EPOPS—HOOPOE.

The Hoopoe has so striking an appearance that it can never be mistaken. Its stately dignified walk, and its mode of erecting and depressing its crest attract attention at once. Its beauty generally ensures its death, which is to be strongly lamented, for it would certainly breed here if left unmolested. It is a summer visitant from North Africa, and has appeared in many parts of the county. There is a specimen in the Hereford Museum from the neighbourhood of Ross. Mr. Lingwood says of it in his notes, "The Callow

Hill, 1847," and again "seen in the flesh at Baker's, the bird-stuffer's, Hereford, 1856." The late Rev. H. Cooper Key stated that for three or four years the Hoopoe was a constant visitor to his lawn at Stretton Rectory, Sugwas. One was seen at Fownhope in September, 1881, and another the same year was brought dead into Hereford. The Rev. C. L. Eagles also saw one at Longtown. In the autumn of 1883 a pair of Hoopoes were seen in the immediate neighbourhood of Hereford, and one of them was shot on Aylstone-hill by Mr. John Bulmer, who has it now in his possession.

It is a curious coincidence that this beautiful bird, like the Kingfisher, is very dirty in its nesting habits, and has given rise to the French proverb, "Sale comme une huppe."

SUB-ORDER—COCCYGES.

FAMILY—CUCULIDÆ.

GENUS—CUCULUS, Lin.

CUCULUS CANORUS—CUCKOO.

Hail, beauteous stranger of the grove!
Thou messenger of Spring!
Now Heaven repairs thy rural seat,
And woods thy welcome sing.

What time the daisy decks the green,
Thy certain voice we hear;
Hast thou a star to guide thy path,
Or mark the rolling year?

Delightful visitant! with thee
I hail the time of flowers,
And hear the sound of music sweet
From birds among the bowers.

Sweet bird! thy bower is ever green,
Thy sky is ever clear;
Thou hast no sorrow in thy song
No winter in thy year!

JOHN LOGAN.

O blithe new comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee bird,
Or but a wandering voice?

WORDSWORTH.

How gladly is the Cuckoo welcomed by every English family! How eagerly is the news of his first arrival announced! How pleased is the child who has first heard its note! It is the harbinger of spring, and tells of the pleasant days to come, of sunshine, leaves and flowers.

Why art thou always welcome, lonely bird?
"The heart grows young again when I am heard;
Not in my double note the magic lies,
But in the fields and woods, the streams and skies."
MONTGOMERY—*Birds.*

Summer is ycomen in:
Loud sing, Cuckoo!

The merry Cuckow, messenger of Spring,
His trompet shrile hath thrise already sounded.
SPENSER—*Sonnet, XIX.*

So does the Cuckow, when the Mavis sings
Begin his witlesse note apace to clatter.
SPENSER—*Sonnet, LXXXIV.*

The general habits of the Cuckoo in this country are fairly well told in the old doggrel lines, thus so fully given in Yarrell:

In March, he leaves his perch;
In April, come he will;
In May, he sings all day;
In June he alters his tune;
In July, he's ready to fly;
Come August, go he must;
In September, you'll him remember;
But October, he'll never get over.

The Cuckoo sometimes arrives many days before he makes himself known by his note. He will not sing in cold weather, and this year (1884) the bitter winds of April prevented his singing for nearly a fortnight after his arrival.

The Cuckoo is very common in Herefordshire, and the noise they sometimes make singing against each other, in the early morning on the outskirts of Hereford, is most disturbing to nervous people. His size, his barred under feathers, and something in the mode of flight, often seem to induce the small birds to mistake him for a Hawk, and they mob him accordingly.

There is good reason to believe, that the male and female Cuckoos arrive in separate bands. It is the male bird chiefly that utters the well-known musical note "Cuckoo"; the female sings

but seldom. The birds do not pair. The females are much less numerous than the males. The male keeps stationary in the district he has selected, and often holds fierce battles in the air with his rivals; whilst the female roams from place to place to find a lover everywhere.

The Cuckoo indeed is a contrast to all others of the feathered tribe. As an active sensitive animal—a bird amongst birds—he is the very personification of selfishness; seeking his own pleasures the live-long day, he leaves to others the common work and duties of life:

> Without a home, without a nest,
> No mate to call his own.
> With no parental love possess'd,
> A creature all alone.
>
> EVANS—*Song of the Birds.*

The Cuckoo builds no nest. It places its egg in that of some insect-feeding birds, and leaves to them the trouble of incubation, and of feeding the young bird. The young Cuckoo, moreover, within a few hours of its birth, wilfully pushes the natural progeny over the edge of the nest to perish, that it may take to itself all the food its little foster parents can supply. For some weeks after the Cuckoo leaves the nest, when it has grown far bigger than themselves, these little birds still feed it, until, led by an irresistible instinct, it flies away to join companions it has never seen before, and to take a journey it knows not where! never again to recognise, so far as is known, its foster parents. Its general character certainly is not amiable:

> He tells of selfish pleasure
> That loves abroad to roam,
> Where the heart can have no treasure
> Because it knows no home.
>
> EVANS—*Songs of the Birds.*

The Cuckoo does not seem very particular as to the little bird it makes a victim of its attentions; the eggs have been found in the nests of Hedge-Sparrows, Robins, Warblers, Larks, Wagtails, Redstarts, Whitethroats, Wrens, Yellow-Hammers, Chaffinches, Thrushes, and Blackbirds. Though it usually selects the insect-eating birds, it is very remarkable that the Chaffinch, Greenfinch or Linnet will,

if a young Cuckoo has been forced on their care, feed it partially with insects, though their own young would have been fed entirely with the seeds and grain which is their own natural food.

The egg of the Cuckoo is extremely small for so large a bird. It is scarcely larger than that of the Lark or the Wagtail, and is not therefore so much out of place in those small birds' nests. It is now generally believed, after much discussion amongst Ornithologists, that the Cuckoo conveys her egg in her throat to the nest into which she selects to place it. The Rev. Clement Ley has "on four or five different occasions found the egg of the Cuckoo in nests placed in the cavities of trees or banks, of which the apertures were indisputably too small to allow the Cuckoo to do more than insert her head and neck." Mr. Ley also inclines to the belief that the colour of the egg will vary according to the nest in which it is found, being more grey in the Wagtail's nest, more green in the Hedge-sparrow's nest, and more brown in that of the Titlark; an approximation to the colour of the eggs of those several birds, which may possibly be due to the instinctive selection of the particular Cuckoo of the nest in which she places it. The Rev. W. Baskerville Mynors has three Cuckoo's eggs taken at Llanwarne, from a Greenfinch's, Hedge Sparrow's, and Lark's nests, varying a little in size, but all somewhat resembling House Sparrow's eggs.

The nests of the Hedge-Sparrow, the Reed-Warbler, the Pied-Wagtail, and the Meadow-Pipit are perhaps those most usually selected.

The food of the Cuckoo is made up of insects and caterpillars generally, but, as soon as they appear, it consists almost entirely of hairy caterpillars, such as few other birds will touch. These hairs often accumulate in the stomach of the Cuckoo, in a spiral fashion, leading superficial observers to think the stomach is lined with hair. Cuckoos do not prey upon other birds, as has been stated, nor do they suck eggs, a fable which may possibly have arisen from its own broken egg being found in the throat of a Cuckoo just killed.

The Rev. W. Baskerville Mynors was so fortunate a few years ago, as to witness an arrival of Cuckoos. He writes; "about 5-45 a.m. on April 14th, I was waiting to see the masons and men come to work; all was hushed, scarce an insect buzzing about; while admiring the beauties of nature, my attention was arrested by a curious, unknown, apparently distant sound; a dull chattering, with a few sharp accents; listening with great attention and gazing steadily around, after some seconds, I descried a line of something, high as the eye could reach, about the size of Wagtails, moving from S.E. towards N.W., equidistant, probably from 20 to 40 yards apart. This was an arrival of Cuckoos. I believe I saw the end of the straight line of birds, probably by no means the beginning of it. While carefully watching them, I saw about four or five leave the line, and descend with a clumsy zigzag movement till near the earth; two or three certainly remained, apparently well satisfied, as if exclaiming 'yes, these are my dear old quarters'; one or two re-ascended, and I could imagine them grumbling out, 'I've made a geographical mistake, or trees and hedgerows are gone,' as they rejoined the almost straight line aloft."

This interesting observation of Mr. Mynors tends to support the statement that migratory birds return to their old resting places. This may be so, since Fly Catchers, Shrikes, Chiff-Chaffs, and a horde of other migratory birds, do return year after year to nidificate in the same spot. The note heard by Mr. Mynors, however, suggests that the flock may have consisted of ladies only, since it is now believed that male and female Cuckoos come to us in separate flocks, as is the case with some other migrants.

Hark!—The Cuckoo's sprightly note
That tells the coming of the vernal prime,
And cheers the heart of youth and aged man,
Say, sweet stranger, whence hast thou ta'en thy flight,
From Asia's spicy groves, or Afric's clime,
And who directs thy wandering journey far?
Rev. W. Munsey.

Pliny and the older naturalists supposed the Cuckoo of summer to become a Hawk in winter; and it is still firmly believed in some parts of the country, that the same individual

bird is a Cuckoo at one part of the year, and a Hawk at another; in fact, the migration of Cuckoos is changed into a mere transmigration. This may in part be accounted for, by the strange resemblance there is in the plumage of a young Cuckoo to that of the Sparrow-hawk, as well as in the particular mode of its flight. So late even as the seventeenth century it was thought that the Cuckoos lay torpid for the winter in hollow trees; facts which show that nothing was known then of their migration to the South of Africa.

The Cuckoo has been traced as far South as Natal and Damara-Land in Africa, and also nearer the Equator, but in North Africa it is as common a favourite as with ourselves. It is widely spread over Europe and Asia. Its long journeys may be one of the reasons for the strange instinct with which it is endowed to build no nest. It does not remain long enough in one locality to rear its own young.

There is much yet to be learnt of the Cuckoo's history, its remarkable peculiarities, and the strange part the bird plays in the economy of nature. Legends and poetical references to the Cuckoo abound in all authorities. His first note is ever regarded as the harbinger of bright genial weather, of warmth, comfort, and plenty.

It is he that according to nursery saying "picks up the dirt" and ushers in the delights of May.

No wonder the poet hails him as

> Thrice welcome! darling of the spring!
> Even yet thou art to me
> No bird; but an invisible thing,
> A voice, a mystery.
>
> WORDSWORTH.

[Genus—COCCYSTES.]

[COCCYSTES GLANDARIUS—Great Spotted Cuckoo.]

Has occurred once in Ireland.

[Genus—Coccyzus.]

[Coccyzus americanus—Yellow-billed Cuckoo.]

Has occurred five times in the British Islands.

[Coccyzus erythrophthalmus—Black-billed Cuckoo.]

One single example occurred in Ireland.

Order—STRIGES.

Family—STRIGIDÆ.

Genus—STRIX.

STRIX FLAMMEA—Barn-owl.

[*Aluco flammeus—Yarrell.*]

Solaque culminibus ferali carmine bubo
Sæpe queri et longas in fletum ducere voces.

Virgil—*Æneid IV., 462-3.*

With a boding note
The solitary Screech Owl strains her throat;
And on a chimney's top, or turret's height,
Disturbs the silence of the [lonely] night.

Dryden—*Trans.*

Owls have much in common. They are as distinct from all other birds in appearance as they are in habits and in character. The upright position in which they hold themselves, their large heads, and staring eyes, with the feathers of the face radiating from each eye, give them a quaint air of meditation. Of all birds, they alone have their eyes immediately in front, like man; and this, joined with a peculiarly solemn and grave expression, and frequent winks, makes them wear a humorous and half-human look, such as no other animal has in an equal degree. Their nocturnal habits, and the easy buoyant flight, which causes them so often to be seen, without being heard, strike the imagination; and above and beyond all, when their peculiar, hollow, weird tone of voice, is suddenly heard in the gloom and stillness of the night, it never fails to startle those who recognise it, and often greatly terrifies those who do not. No wonder it has generally been represented by the poets as a bird of ill omen, the messenger of doom, the dreaded foreteller of woe, misfortune, or death. Innumerable allusions of this kind occur.

Fœdaque fit volucris, venturi nuncia luctûs,
Ignavus bubo, dirum mortalibus omen.
OVID—*Metamorph, V., 550.*

The loathsome bird that heralds coming woe,
The moping Owl, dread sign to men below.
REV. THOS. WOODHOUSE—*Trans.*

Tectoque profanus
Incubuit bubo, thalamique in culmine sedet.
OVID—*Metamorph, VI., 432.*

The Owl unclean alighted on the roof
And high above the chamber sat aloof.
REV. THOS. WOODHOUSE—*Trans.*

The Oule eke, that of death the bode bringeth.
CHAUCER.

And now the crowing Cocke and now the Owle
Lowd shriking; him afflicted to the very soule.
SPENSER.

The ill-faced Owl death's dreadful messenger.
IBID.

The rueful strich still wayting on the beere.
IBID.

Out on ye Owls! nothing but songs of death?
SHAKESPEARE—*Richard III., IV., 4.*

The Owl shriek'd at thy birth—an evil sign.
SHAKESPEARE—*Part III., Henry VI., V., 6.*

It was the Owl that shriek'd; the fatal bellman
Which gives the stern'st good night.
SHAKESPEARE—*Macbeth, II., 2.*

The night (I sing by night, sometimes an Owl,
And now and then a Nightingale) is dim;
And the loud shriek of sage Minerva's fowl
Rattles around me her discordant hymn.
BYRON.

Again the Screech-owl shrieks, ungracious sound.
BLAIR—*Grove.*

Birds of omen, dark and foul,
Night-crow, Raven, Bat and Owl.
SCOTT—*Gœlic Legend.*

Each bird of evil omen woke,
The Screech-owl from her thicket broke,
And fluttered down the dell.
SCOTT—*Harold the Dauntless.*

Blue-eyed, strange-voiced, sharp-beaked, ill-omened fowl,
What ar't thou?
—What I ought to be—an Owl;
But if I'm such a scare-crow in your eye,
You're a much greater fright in mine,—good bye!
MONTGOMERY—*Birds.*

and still numerous other illustrations of a similar character might be given.

The nocturnal habits of Owls may afford some illustrations of society, as for example :—

> The lady Cynthia, mistress of the shade,
> Goes with the fashionable Owls to bed.
>
> YOUNG—*Fame.*

And the Owl is also the subject of many bacchanalian songs :—

> Of all the brave birds that ever I see,
> The Owl is the fairest in her degree ;
> For all day long she sits in a tree,
> And when the night comes, away flies she,
> Tu whit ! Tu whoo !
> To whom drink'st thou, Sir Knave ?
> To you ! To you !
>
> DEUTEROMETIA, 1689.

introduced by Beaumont and Fletcher in the play *The Knight of the Burning Pestle ;* or as Sir Walter Scott's song says :—

> Of all the birds in bush, or tree,
> Commend me to the Owl ;
> For he may best ensample be
> To those the cup that trowl,

with the refrain—

> Then though hours be late, and weather foul,
> We'll drink to the health of the bonny, bonny Owl.

Somewhat similar are the words of the well-known glee—

> The Chough and Crow to roost are gone,
> The Owl hoots on the tree ;
> Uprouse ye then
> My merry, merry men
> It is our opening day.

Owls are not only regarded with prejudice by mankind, but they seem equally unpopular with birds. "There is some sad secret in the Owl's history," says Mr. Evans, "which we do not know, which no bird has yet divulged to us, and which seems to have made him an outcast from the society of the birds of the day. He is branded with perpetual infamy. . . . . The Hawk may be more dreaded, but he cannot be more hated than the Owl," p. 82, *Songs of the Birds.*

> Not a bird of the forest e'er mates with him,
> All mock him outright by day ;
> But at night when the woods grow still and dim,
> The boldest will shrink away.
>
> BARRY CORNWALL—*Owl.*

Owls suffer great persecution, and they rarely deserve it. They render the greatest service to mankind, by a wholesale destruction of rats, mice, and bats, whilst their nocturnal habits prevent them from being able to do much injury, either in the game preserves, or in the henroost. Their numbers, nevertheless, are rapidly diminishing before the fatal pole traps of the keeper; though these may not, perhaps, be always set for them. Their usefulness admits of ready proof, since Owls return the bones and indigestible portions of their food in elongated pellets, and great numbers of these pellets have been very carefully examined, amongst others by the German Naturalists. Dr. Altum communicated to the German Ornithological Society in 1862 the following results of his examination with regard to the three commonest species of Owls (as given by Yarrell) :—

REMAINS FOUND IN THE PELLETS.

	No. of pellets examined.	Bats.	Rats.	Mice.	Voles.	Shrews.	Moles.	Birds.	Beetles.
Barn Owl	706	16	3	237	693	1590	—	22	—
Long-eared Owl ...	25	—	—	6	35	—	—	2	—
Tawny Owl ...	210	—	6	42	296	33	48	18	48

In no single instance was any trace of food found showing injury to mankind, whilst every portion, in every pellet, proved the great benefit they rendered to him.

The Owl that, watching in the barn
Sees the mouse creeping in the corn,
Sits still, and shuts his round blue eyes
As if he slept,—until he spies
The little beast within his stretch—
Then starts,—and seizes on the wretch!

BUTLER.

The White or Barn-Owl resides all the year with us, and is perhaps the best known of all British Owls, from its frequenting church towers, barns, old malt kilns, deserted ruins, and trees, and keeping year by year to the same haunts.

Alone and warming his five wits
The White Owl in the belfry sits.

TENNYSON.

The White Owl seeks the antique ruin'd wall,
Fearless of rapine; or in hollow trees,
Which age has cavern'd, safely courts repose.
BIDLAKE.

The plumage of the Barn-Owl is soft and delicately penciled. Its face is heart-shaped during life, becoming circular when dead. It screeches, and does not hoot usually, though at times it certainly has a peculiar hoot. Its principal diet consists of field mice, shrews, rats, and small birds says M. Prevost, agreeing with Dr. Altum's list. The twenty-two birds, found by the last gentleman, consisted of nineteen Sparrows, one Greenfinch, and two Swifts. It is, therefore, wholly beneficial and should be protected carefully. White, of Selborne, says "We can stand on an eminence, and see the Barn Owls beat the fields over like a setting-dog, and often drop down in the grass or corn." Waterton states, from observation, that "when the Barn-Owl has young ones, it will bring a mouse to the nest every twelve or fifteen minutes," and he adds, "if their night work could be seen by day, all farmers would acknowledge the great service they render." The nests, however, are so easily found, and the birds themselves are so handsome, that great destruction goes on, in spite, it may be, of the farmers' wish to preserve them. It is to be feared that they will be gradually exterminated, unless a determined effort is made in their favour.

Let the screeching Owl
A sacred bird be held; protect her nest
Whether in neighbouring crag, within the reach
Of venturous boy, it hang, or in the rent
Of some old echoing tower, where her sad plaint
The livelong night she moans, save when she skims
Prowling along the ground, or through your barn
Her nightly round performs.
GRAHAME—*Georgics.*

FAMILY—ASIONIDÆ.

GENUS—ASIO.

ASIO OTUS—LONG-EARED OWL.

Oh! when the moon shines and the dogs do howl,
Then, then, is the reign of the horned Owl.
BARRY CORNWALL.

This handsome Owl remains all the year, and is probably, more common in the wooded districts of the county than is generally supposed, for, owing to its shy, retired, and nocturnal habits, it is seldom seen. It builds in the old drey of the squirrel, or in a deserted Magpie's nest, and its food, M. Prevost says, consists of mice, shrews, rats, squirrels, cockchafers, and beetles. The two birds mentioned by Dr. Altum were two species of Titmouse.

A specimen of Long-eared Owl was killed at Widemarsh, close to Hereford, in 1878, and another was shot at Lyde, two miles off, in 1881. The specimen in the Hereford Museum was killed at Wilton, near Ross.

A nest of this Owl, with five young ones, was found near Aymestry, in March, 1884; and in the same place there was a second brood at the end of June.

ASIO BRACHYOTUS—Short-eared Owl.

[*Asio accipitrinus—Yarrell.*]

> What time the preying Owl with sleepy wing
> Sweeps o'er the cornfield studious.
> Hurdis—*The Favorite Village.*

This migrating Owl arrives for the winter from the north in October, frequenting fields, moors, and heather. It seldom perches, but rests on the ground in long grass, or in the turnip fields; and in Herefordshire, it is more frequently met with in some years, than others, but it is always rare. M. Prevost found its food to consist of mice, cockchafers, crickets, beetles, and other insects, with small birds occasionally. Partridge shooters not unfrequently meet with the Short-eared Owl.

Genus—SYRNIUM.

SYRNIUM ALUCO—Tawny Owl.

[*Strix aluco—Yarrell.*]

'Tis the middle of the night by the castle clock
And the Owls have awakened the crowing cock!
Tu-whit! Tu-whoo!
And hark again! the crowing cock,
How lazily he crew.
Coleridge—*Christabel.*

The loud clear hoot of the Brown or Tawny Owl, the ulula of the ancients, most people consider melancholy, but Shakespeare's song says:—

Then nightly sings the staring Owl
To-who,
Tu-whit, tu-who, a merry note.
—*Love's Labour Lost, V., 2.*

The Brown Owl, as it is called in Herefordshire, is more abundant than any other species. It resides throughout the year, and is to be found in all the wooded districts of the county, but its numbers are certainly diminishing, from persecutions of keepers with their guns, and deadly pole traps. It rarely leaves its place of concealment during the day, and is therefore seldom seen.

. . . . From yon ivy-mantled tower
The moping Owl does to the moon complain.
Gray—*Elegy.*

It is fond of thick woods, and the hollow trees of parks, in which it builds. The young are singularly ugly lumps of grey down, hissing and snorting when a strange hand approaches them, and fiercely using their claws and beaks. Their mother, however, speaking of them, in Lafontaine, to her friend the Eagle, calls them.

. . . . Mes petits sont mignons,
Beaux bien faits et jolis sur tous leurs compagnons.

The Rev. Clement Ley once found a Starling's nest, and on two occasions the nest of the Blue Tit, in the same hollow tree, with, and in close proximity to, the young family of the Tawny Owl, an awful situation one would imagine for the little Tit in particular to have selected. He would daily look down upon the headless carcasses of small birds, including very probably some of his own

species, stored in the Owl's larder, but Tommy is not given to moonlight expeditions, and the big Owl could make nothing of the small chink in which its pert little neighbour resided (Woolhope Trans., 1869, p. 72).

Dr. Altum's table shows the dietary of the Tawny Owl, but it is able to catch fish, according to Yarrell, and does not object to a young rabbit or leveret when it meets with one. On the whole it is, however, very much more beneficial, than injurious, to the district it inhabits.

Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
With a lengthened loud halloo
Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tuwhoo-o-o.
TENNYSON.

[Genus—NYCTEA.]

[NYCTEA SCANDIACA—Snowy Owl.]

An occasional visitor to the North of Scotland.

[Genus—SURNIA.]

[SURNIA ULULA—European Hawk-owl.]

One was shot at Amesbury, Wilts, 1876.

[SURNIA FUNEREA—American Hawk-owl.
[*Hawk-owl—Yarrell.*]

An occasional straggler to Great Britain and Ireland.

[Genus—NYCTALA.]

[NYCTALA TENGMALMI—Tengmalm's Owl.]

An occasional visitor to the Eastern Counties of Scotland and England. A stuffed one, without history, is in the Hereford Museum.

[NYCTALA ACADICA—Saw-whet Owl.]

Said to have occurred at Beverley in Yorkshire.

Genus—SCOPS.

SCOPS GIU—Scops Owl.

Headed like Owles, with beekes uncomely bent.
Spenser—*Faerie Queen.*

This small tufted Owl has only once been met with in Herefordshire so far as is known. A pair of these birds, says Rev. Clement Ley, were liberated at Fawley about the year 1862, by Mr. J. Skyrme, of Ross, but nothing more was heard of them.

The cry of the Scops Owl is melancholy and monotonous —"Kew, kew, kew," repeated at intervals as regular as the ticking of a clock, and as little melodious as the croak of a frog.

[Scops asio—American Screech Owl.]
One was shot at Kirkstall Abbey, in Yorkshire, in 1852.

[Genus—Bubo.]
[Bubo ignavus—Eagle Owl.]
An occasional visitant to Great Britain.

Genus—ATHENE.

ATHENE NOCTUA—Little Owl.

[*Carine noctua—Yarrell.*]

What care though Owl did fly
About the great Athenian Admiral's mast.
Keats—*Endymion.*

Shy as the Athenian bird, she shuns the day.
Armstrong—*The Day.*

Our worth the Grecian sages knew;
They gave our sires the honour due,
They weigh'd the dignity of fowls,
And pry'd into the depth of Owls:
Athens, the seat of learned fame,
With general voice rever'd our name:
On merit, title was conferr'd,
And all ador'd the Athenian bird.

The Little Owl was the emblematic bird of ancient Athens, the favourite of Minerva, as the characteristic figures on sculptures and coins abundantly prove. Indeed some have supposed that the great goddess herself was represented, in the early days of Greece, with an Owl's head. The Rev. F. O. Morris, in his "British Birds," records a specimen as having been obtained in Herefordshire, in 1838, which is now in the possession of Mr. Chaffey; and the Rev. R. Blight, in his list of birds (Woolhope Transactions for 1879) mentions having once seen it at Bredwardine.

The Little Owl is a grotesque looking bird, whose physiognomy is characterized by "fear with spectacles and a sharp nose." It takes up its position in the deep holes of trees or ruins, and as evening comes on, utters a plaintive dolorous cry of "K'week, K'week," very continuously, which thus reveals its presence. The cry of the Little Owl in the night," says Richardson, "is a single melancholy note, repeated at intervals of a minute or two; and it is one of the superstitious practices of the Indians to whistle when they hear it. If the bird is silent when thus challenged, the speedy death of the inquirer is augured; hence its name with them is that of the 'Death Bird.'"

Now homewards, as she hopeless went
The churchyard path along,
The blast blew cold, the dark Owl scream'd
Her lover's funeral song.
MALLET—*Edwin and Emma.*

ORDER—ACCIPITRES.

[Family—VULTURIDÆ.]

[Genus—GYPS.]

[GYPS FULVUS—Griffon Vulture.]

Once obtained in Ireland.

[Genus—NEOPHRON.]

[NEOPHRON PERCNOPTERUS—Egyptian Vulture.]

Twice recorded in Great Britain.

FAMILY—FALCONIDÆ.

GENUS—CIRCUS.

[CIRCUS ÆRUGINOSUS—Marsh Harrier.]

Very scarce in Great Britain and Ireland.

CIRCUS CYANEUS—HEN HARRIER.

The Hen Harrier, and its female, called Ringtail, seem like different birds, from their varied plumage. They frequent flat marshy situations, low moors and commons, and are consequently lessening everywhere in numbers, from the increased cultivation of waste lands. They fly low and hunt the ground regularly, and build on the ground. Their food consists chiefly of small birds, of which they destroy many, small animals and reptiles. One killed near London is stated by Yarrell to have had as many as twenty lizards in its stomach.

The Hen Harrier is now becoming very scarce in Herefordshire. Twelve or fifteen years ago, says Mr. Ley, it was not unfrequently met with in the Ross district, at Breinton, Monnington, and Bredwardine. Mr. T. F. Phelps shot a slate-coloured Hawk at the Weir End, near Ross (1873), which proved to be a Hen Harrier. In the Autumn of 1878, one was taken near Whitney; and in 1881, a fine male specimen was shot by the keeper of Sir Thomas H. Crawley-Boevy, Bart., of Flaxley Abbey, so near to the borders of Herefordshire, that it may fairly be noticed among our local birds.

Thirty or forty years ago, the Hen Harrier was occasionally to be met with between Ross and Monmouth, but the keepers connected with the large estates on the banks of the Wye, have succeeded but too well in exterminating the larger birds of prey that formerly visited those localities, and making their appearance in the county, now, very rare.

[Circus cineraceus—Montagu's Harrier.]
An irregular autumn migrant in the Eastern Counties.

Genus—BUTEO.

BUTEO VULGARIS—Buzzard.

This have I herd ofte in seiyng
That man ne may for no dauntyng,
Make a Sperhauke of a Bosarde.
Chaucer—*The Romaunt of the Rose.*

Above the rest
The noble Buzzard ever pleased me best:
Of small renown, 'tis true, for, not to lie,
We call him but a Hawk by courtesy.
Dryden—*Hind and Panther.*

God save King Buzzard was the general cry,
A portly prince and goodly to the sight;
He seemed a son of Anak from his height,
Like those whom stature did to crowns prefer;
Black-brow'd and bluff, like Homer's Jupiter.
Dryden—*Hind and Panther.*

He'd prove a Buzzard is no fowl,
And that a lord may be an owl.
Butler—*Hudibras.*

The monarch bird, with blythness hurd,
The chanting litil silvan byrd,
Calit up a Buzart, quha was then
His favorite and chamberlane.

The Buzzard is the least rare of the large Hawks. It was formerly to be met with in all the large woods of the county. "About fifteen years ago," says the Rev. Clement Ley, "I have seen six Buzzards soaring together over the Doward wood, and have seldom visited the Doward without seeing some of them." It bred in that wood, Mr. W. C. Blake says, in 1881. It has been noticed almost annually at Bishopswood, and more rarely at Penyard Wood, near Ross; a fine specimen was trapped on the Leys estate, in March, 1883, and its partner was seen in the neighbourhood; another was shot this summer (1884) at Peterchurch.

A Buzzard was shot on a farm at Grove Common, Sellack, in

1885, but not preserved; and Mr. W. C. Blake was shown, by the keeper of Goodrich Castle, a spot where the Buzzard had nested in the ivied ruins in 1886.

The Buzzard never takes its prey on the wing, but, like the Kite, always on the ground. It is very destructive, and takes young hares, rabbits, and feathered game of all kinds. It eats also carrion, mice, worms, beetles, and snakes. It is useful in driving off Wood Pigeons, and in destroying weak and feeble birds. It builds on rocks, or in the fork of a large tree; and often appropriates old nests of the Crow and Magpie, instead of constructing a fresh nest for itself.

[BUTEO BOREALIS—Red-tailed Buzzard.]
Said to have been killed in Nottinghamshire, 1860.

[BUTEO DESERTORUM—African Buzzard.]
Once killed in Wiltshire, 1878.

[Genus—ARCHIBUTEO.]
[ARCHIBUTEO LAGOPUS—Rough-legged Buzzard.]
An irregular Autumn or Winter visitant to Great Britain.

GENUS—AQUILA.
[AQUILA CLANGA—Spotted Eagle.]
[*Aquila nævia*—*Yarrell.*]
A very scarce visitor to Great Britain.

AQUILA CHRYSAËTUS—GOLDEN EAGLE.

The royal bird his lonely kingdom forms
Amidst the gathering clouds and sullen storms;
Through the wide waste of air he darts his sight,
And holds his sounding pinions pois'd for flight.
With cruel eye premeditates the war,
And marks his destin'd victim from afar.

MRS. BARBAULD—*The Eagle.*

Eagles, golden feather'd, who do tower
Above us in their beauty, and must reign
In right thereof.
KEATS—*Endymion.*

Whose joy was in the wilderness to breathe
The difficult air of the iced mountain top.

The Golden Eagle is very rarely to be seen in the southern portion of Great Britain. It has become rare of late years in Scotland. In November, 1876, a very fine specimen was caught in the park at Berrington, near Leominster. The bird had been observed about the woods for some two or three weeks before it was caught. Its flight was majestic, and attention was directed to it, by its being frequently mobbed by Crows and other birds.

Bring in the Crows
To peck the Eagles.
SHAKESPEARE—*Coriolanus.*

It is said on one occasion to have hovered for some time over a little child at Stockton, and mothers with children became very timid about it. It was caught by the talon in a trap baited with half a rabbit. "It measured," says Lord Rodney, "eight feet from point to point of the wings, and stood nearly three feet high. It was in good plumage, and fair condition when taken. The bird is now stuffed, and in a glass case at Berrington Hall.

The captive Thrush may brook the cage
The prison'd Eagle dies for rage.
SCOTT—*Lady of the Lake.*

The Eagle is the symbol of majesty and power, and as such was the imperial emblem of Rome; and since those days the Empires of France, Russia, Austria, and Germany, have adopted it on their standards, in their claim to represent the Roman Empire.

Art thou the king of birds, proud Eagle, say?
—I am; my talons and my beak bear sway.
A greater king than I, if thou would'st be,
Govern thy tongue, but let thy thoughts be free.
MONTGOMERY—*Birds.*

In ecclesiastical art, it is the symbol of the Evangelist, St. John, and many beautiful allusions to it may be found in mediæval writers.

The reference here is chiefly to the lofty soaring flight of the Eagle, and to the old notion that it was the only created thing that could gaze without shrinking, at the unclouded radiance of the sun.

The lecterns of churches are often made in the form of an Eagle, to represent the rapid and victorious flight of the Word of Truth over all lands.

In ancient art, the Eagle appears as bearing the thunderbolts of Jove, and as such is described by Horace as

> Ministrum fulminis alitem
> Cui Rex deorum regnum in aves vagas
> Permisit.

Tennyson pictures him in his lonely height—

> He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
> Close to the sun in lonely lands,
> Ring'd with the azure world he stands.

[Genus—HALIAËTUS.]

[HALIAËTUS ALBICILLA—White-tailed Eagle.]

A rare resident on the Sea Coast of Scotland and Ireland.

[Genus—ASTUR.]

[ASTER PALUMBARIUS—Gos-Hawk.]

A rare straggler to Great Britain.

[ASTUR ATRICAPILLUS—American Goshawk.]

One killed in Perthshire, 1869; one in Tipperary, 1870; and another in King's County, in 1870.

GENUS—ACCIPITER.

ACCIPITER NISUS—SPARROW-HAWK.

> I have a fine Hawk for the bush.
> SHAKESPEARE—*Merry Wives III., 8.*

The eye of the Hawk and the fire therein.
COLERIDGE—*Tell's Birthplace.*

This bold, active, little short-winged Hawk, is nearly as common as the Kestrel. It is much less abundant than formerly, but it is still to be found throughout the county. It chiefly lives upon birds, but will also take mice, insects, beetles and cockchafers. It usually builds in the deserted nest of a Crow or Magpie, but will occasionally build its own nest. The female, as usual with birds of prey, is stronger and bolder than the male, and both are very destructive in the poultry yard and the game preserve. In the *Zoologist* for 1865, it is mentioned that a brood of young Sparrow-Hawks were taken, and put in a cage near the nest. In two days the old Hawk brought them ten birds, viz.: two young Peewits, two young Thrushes, two young Chaffinches, a Skylark, a Meadow Pipit, a Willow Wren, and another newly-hatched Squab (p. 9440).

Mr. W. C. Blake, of Ross, gives two illustrations of the audacity of the Sparrow-Hawk. In 1875, one dashed through the glass of the vinery at the Gas Works, at Ross, after a small bird; and in 1879, another plunged through the glass roof of the conservatory at Gayton Hall, tempted by the sight of some Canaries; numerous other similar examples might be given.

The Sparrow-Hawk is a wild bird and difficult to tame, but there are falconers who can do so, and use it for hawking Partridges, Landrails, Blackbirds, and Thrushes. In Lombardy, it is not thought extraordinary, for a Sparrow-Hawk to take from seventy to eighty quails for its master in a single day.

Enough for me
To boast the gentle Spar-hawk on my fist,
Or fly the Partridge from the bristly field.
SOMERVILLE—*Field Sport.*

GENUS—MILVUS.

MILVUS ICTINUS—KITE.

Kites that swim sublime
In still-repeated circles, screaming loud.
COWPER—*The Sofa.*

The sudden scythe-like sweep of wings that dare
The headlong plunge through eddying gulfs of air.
LONGFELLOW—*Wayside Inn.*

The graceful smooth flight of the Kite with its long, forked tail, is an object of admiration rarely to be enjoyed in Herefordshire. Its movement through the air resembles sailing rather than flying, and the Kite is thought, by the movement of its tail, to have taught mankind the art of steering.

It has also given its name to the paper toy, so favourite an amusement, in many parts of England, of the juvenile population; kite-flying requiring sufficient skill to make it an interesting pastime.

Some years ago the Kite nested in Brampton Bryan Park. The park-keeper found the nest, and by patient watching managed to shoot the male bird; the female found a new mate, and returned to share the same fate. These birds are now in the Ludlow Museum.

The last specimen known to have been captured, was taken near Symonds Yat, many years since, and it is now in the Hereford Museum. A Kite was reported to have been seen in the woods near Symonds Yat in 1884. It is still occasionally seen on the northern side of the county, and Mr. Newman mentions that two nests were found in Radnorshire in 1870 (*Zoologist*, in 1871, p. 2519). The food of the Kite is offal of any kind when it offers—leverets, rabbits, snakes, frogs, or unfledged birds. It builds in the forked branch of a large tree, or on the ledge of a rock. It has a large nest built of sticks, straw, and all sorts of materials, with a soft lining, in which cloth rags not unfrequently have a place; hence Shakespeare says

When the Kite builds, look to lesser linen.
—*Winter's Tale, IV., 2.*

The Kite takes its food on the ground. It has been taught to hawk, but it is a craven bird, and quickly gives up the hunt for its quarry.

The coward Kite.
CHAUCER.

The brood devouring Kite.
QUARLES.

It is apt to visit the poultry yard, but is actually known to have been driven off by a spirited old hen.

And other losses do the dames recite,
Of Chick, and Duck, and Gosling gone astray,
All falling preys to the fell swooping Kite;
And on the story runs, morning, noon and night.
CLARE—*Village Minstrel.*

Kites are ever on the look out for carrion.

The Kite will to her carrion fly.
KING—*Art of Love.*

Shakespeare says—

Ravens, Crows, and Kites
Fly o'er our heads, and downward look on us
As we were sickly prey.
—*Julius Cæsar, V. 2.*

To show the force of circumstantial evidence he says—

Who finds the Partridge in the Pattock's nest,
But may imagine how the bird was dead,
Although the Kite soar with unbloodied beak.
—*2nd Henry VI., III. 2.*

Bacon gives us a rural proverb, that

Kites flying aloft show fair and dry weather.

[MILVUS MIGRANS—Black Kite.]
Once recorded in Great Britain, 1867.

GENUS—ELANOÏDES.

ELANOÏDES FURCATUS—SWALLOW-TAILED KITE.

[*Nauclerus furcatus—Yarrell.*]

The Rev. Clement Ley says with reference to this bird:—"There is no satisfactory evidence of its having been met with in Herefordshire. Once, in 1860 or 1861, I saw a Kite deep black

above and white beneath, soaring at a great height over the garden at Sellack Vicarage, Ross. It circled higher and higher, until it was altogether lost to sight. On an earlier occasion, about 1854, the Rev. W. Baskerville Mynors informed me that a bird, answering to the description of the Swallow-tailed Kite, had been seen on several days at Treago, and had settled on the roof of Treago House, and he also shewed me a wing feather that had been picked up there at the time, which certainly resembled the wing feathers of this species.

[Genus—ELANUS.]

[ELANUS CŒRULEUS—Black-winged Kite.]

Said to have been shot in Harrison Bay, Ireland, 1862.

GENUS—PERNIS.

PERNIS APIVORUS—HONEY BUZZARD.

Some few years since the Honey Buzzard was not uncommon in Herefordshire, but it has now become very scarce, from the relentless persecutions of the gamekeepers with their destructive traps. Mr. Lechmere, of Fownhope Court, has a very good specimen of the Honey Buzzard, which was trapped by Mr. Eckley's keeper on Credenhill Camp, about the year 1861. It is a male bird, in good plumage. The Rev. Clement Ley says (Woolhope Transactions, 1869, p. 72) "a few years since, a male Honey Buzzard was killed in the neighbourhood of Ross, and within a few days a female was shot from her nest in Newent Wood, which was not improbably the mate of the former bird; the nest contained three eggs." About ten years since, the Hereford bird-stuffers had two or three freshly killed Honey Buzzards brought to them every year. Three were brought, in 1880, from Whitfield, to be stuffed. They consisted of an old male bird, and two young ones

that had been bred in the Whitfield Woods. The old bird was sold at a bazaar in aid of St. Devereux Church, and for the young birds the keeper asked the prohibitory price of £5. Mr. W. C. Blake, of Ross, states that a Honey Buzzard was trapped on the Goodrich estate in the summer of 1879; and another specimen in July, 1881, at the Queen's Wood, Marcle. A second bird was seen in company with this one, and the presumption was strong that it was the mate, and that they had bred in the locality.

The food of the Honey Buzzard consists chiefly of the larvæ of bees and wasps, moles, earthworms, slugs, coleopterous and lepidopterous insects, and occasionally dead flesh. It does, therefore, but little injury, and but for the hatred of gamekeepers to Hawks of all kinds, might safely be allowed to give interest and pleasure in our woods and fields.

Mr. W. C. Blake points out that the cere, which in all other birds of prey is naked, in the Honey Buzzard is thickly set with feathers, and is thus protected against the stings of wasps and bees, affording an admirable instance of the wisdom of its great Creator.

[Genus—HIEROFALCO.]

[HIEROFALCO GYRFALCO—Gyr Falcon.]

One specimen shot near Orford in Suffolk in 1867.

[HIEROFALCO CANDICANS—Greenland Falcon.]

[*Falco candidans*—*Yarrell.*]

An occasional visitant from the North to the British Islands.

[HIEROFALCO ISLANDUS—Iceland Falcon.]

A scarce and occasional visitant to Great Britain.

GENUS—FALCO.

FALCO PEREGRINUS—PEREGRINE FALCON.

Quam facile accipiter saxo, sacer ales, ab alto
Consequitur pennis sublimem in nube columbam,
Comprensamque tenet, pedibusque eviscerat uncis;
Tum cruor et vulsæ labuntur ab æthere plumæ.
VIRGIL—*Æneid XI.*, 723.

So dashes from some rock above,
The hawk on some defenceless dove;
Fiercely he follows her on high,
Pursues the combat in the sky,
O'ertakes and holds her fast.
His cruel talons tear the prey,
The bloodstained feathers float away,
And to the winds are cast.
REV. THOMAS WOODHOUSE—*Trans.*

I soar, I am a Hawk.
SHAKESPEARE—*Henry V., III.*, 7.

My falcon flies not at ignoble game.
BYRON—*Horace.*

The Peregrine Falcon is very highly esteemed and sought after for the sport of Falconry. It is bold, very docile, and comparatively easy to procure. It is second only in estimation to the Gyr Falcon, which has greater power, but at the same time is more rare and costly. The male Peregrine Falcon, as is usual with hawks, is smaller in size, and in the language of Falconry, is called a "Tiercel," or commonly "Tassel"; and the female, which is larger and more powerful, is called the "Falcon." The young bird is called an "Eyas," and when the Eyasses have lost their nest feathers, they are termed, from the reddish tinge of their plumage, "Red Falcon," or "Red Tiercel," according to their sex. A young bird caught during the season of migration is called a "Peregrine," or "Passage Hawk"; and when caught after the first moult is completed, a "Haggard."

If I do prove her Haggard,
Though at her jesses were my dear heart-strings,
I'd whistle her off and let her down the wind,
To prey at fortune.
SHAKESPEARE—*Othello, III, 3.*

Such are the ordinary terms used in Falconry, and without knowing them, half the interest in the beautiful bird would be lost.

"In the air my noble generous Falcon ascends to such a height, as the dull eyes of beasts and fish are not able to reach to: their bodies are too gross for such high elevation; but from which height I can make her descend by a word from my mouth, which she both knows and obeys, to accept of meat from my hand, to own me for her master, to go home with me, and be willing the next day to afford me the like recreation."—ISAAC WALTON.

My princess of the cloud, my plumed purveyor,
My far-eyed queen of the winds—thou that canst soar
Beyond the morning Lark, and howsoe'er
Thy quarry wind and wheel, swoop down upon him
Eagle-like, lightning-like—strike, make his feathers
Glance in the mid-heaven.
TENNYSON—*The Falcon.*

I mark the Falcons wing their airy way,
And soar to seize, and stooping, strike their prey.
PARNEL—*Eclogue.*

The Falcon is usually flown at Herons or Rooks; and the Tiercel at Partridges, Magpies, or such smaller birds as may be conveniently met with in default of better, to give sport when required.

And pastime both of Hawk and hound, and all
That appertains to noble maintenance.
TENNYSON—*Enid.*

The Falcon poised on soaring wing,
Watching the Wild-duck by the spring.
SCOTT—*Lady of the Lake.*

And again—

Like Wild-ducks couching in the fen,
When stoops the Hawk upon the glen.

The quarry, whatever it may be, will always take down wind, the more easily to escape from the Hawk, and this habit gives the explanation no less ingenious than simple of the often quoted passage of Shakespeare :—

"I am but mad north-north-west; when the wind is southerly, I know a Hawk from a Handsaw" (Ernsaw, or Heronshaw).

Hamlet II., 2.

Hawking was a morning sport, and with the wind north-north-west, the sun would be in the eyes of anyone watching the birds,

and he could not tell the Hawk from the Heron; but with the wind southerly, when the birds fly away from the sun, they could easily be distinguished. Hamlet would thus show that his madness was much akin to other men's sanity.

Note in Yarrell (V. I., p. 57.)

Hawking is still carried on in the New Forest, Hampshire.

The Peregrine Falcon usually builds on the ledge of some precipitous rock near the sea, or a lake, but it also builds occasionally in trees. The bold headland called Culver Cliff, on the east of the Isle of Wight, is a noted resort of the Peregrine Falcon; it has been known to breed there repeatedly within the last few years. Its natural food consists of Grouse, Ptarmigan, Pigeons, Partridges, Ducks, Gulls, and various species of sea fowl; and like all birds that feed on animals covered with fur or feather, it throws up castings formed of the indigestible portion of its food.

A life at every meal, rapacious Hawk?
Spare helpless innocence.
. . . . Troth, pleasant talk!
Yon Sparrow snaps more lives up in a day
Than in a twelvemonth I could take away;
But hark! most gentle censor, in your ear,
A word, a whisper:—you,—are *you* quite clear?
Creation's groans, through ocean, earth and sky,
Ascend from all that walk, or swim, or fly.

MONTGOMERY—*Birds.*

The Peregrine Falcon is now a very rare visitor to Herefordshire.

O for a falconer's lure,
To lure this tassel-gentle back again.

SHAKESPEARE—*Romeo and Juliet, II., 2.*

Still a winter seldom passes without one or two being seen in some part of the county. In 1865, a fine specimen was taken in the neighbourhood of Ross. In 1866, a young Peregrine Falcon was shot in a wood near Leominster. Two others were in company with it, and the woodman believed they had been bred there, which is extremely doubtful, to say the least of it. There are four specimens in the Hereford Museum; two from the Ross district, one from Woolhope, and one from Garnons. There are also many others preserved in private houses, scattered throughout

the county. A pair of Peregrine Falcons were seen in the Letton meadows, in December, 1883, and one of them, at any rate, was seen many times in the same neighbourhood, for some weeks afterwards. In 1884, a Peregrine Falcon, of immature plumage, was shot by Mr. Walter Power, of the Hill Court, near Ross. It was killed nearly opposite Goodrich Court, and is now in the possession of Miss Shand, Old Hill House.

As when a cast of Faulcons make their flight
At an Herneshaw, that lyes aloft on wing,
The whyles they strike at him with heedlesse might,
The warie foule his bill doth backward wring,
On which the first, whose force her first doth bring,
Herselfe quite through the bodie doth engore,
And falleth downe to ground like senselesse thing;
But th' other not so swift as she before,
Fayles of her souse, and passing by doth hurt no more.
SPENSER—*Faerie Queen.*

As confident as is the Falcon's flight against a bird.
SHAKESPEARE—*Richard II., I., 3.*

The Falcon as the Tercel for all the Ducks i' the river.
SHAKESPEARE—*Troilus and Cressida, III., 2.*

FALCO SUBBUTEO—HOBBY.

Larks lie dared to shun the Hobby's flight.
DRYDEN.

Or with my soaring Hobby dare the Lark.
SOMERVILLE—*Field Sports.*

This pretty little Falcon is a migratory species, coming in April, and leaving in October. It is more numerous in some seasons than others; it is not unfrequent in occurrence throughout the wooded districts of the county. A summer never passes, without the opportunity being afforded of occasionally seeing a pair of these beautiful little Falcons soaring aloft, with their narrow bow-like wings and rapid flight, over the great woods of Herefordshire. It has lived in several places in the centre of the county, notably at Aconbury, Caplar, the Haugh Wood, and Breinton. The specimen in the Hereford Museum was shot at Aconbury.

A Hobby was killed at Stoke Edith in 1867; and another was shot at Bullingham in September, 1886, and seen by Mr. W. C. Blake at a bird-stuffer's in Hereford.

The Hobby will sometimes dash through a window at a small bird in a cage. The Skylark has a special dread of it, and bird-catchers sometimes use it, or an imitation of it, to catch the Larks, which is called "daring" them.

> The people will chop, like trouts at an artificial fly,
> And dare like Larks under the awe of a painted Hobby.
> —*L'Estrange.*

The Hobby might well be spared by the gamekeeper, for its chief food consists of small birds—Skylarks, Swallows, Martins, Swifts, Sandpipers, young Plovers, and occasionally a young Partridge. It often hawks Cockchafers and beetles. It builds in high trees, and often in the old nests of the Crow or the Magpie. By experienced falconers it is sometimes trained to fly at Skylarks, Quails, and Snipes.

FALCO ÆSALON—MERLIN.

"Not yielding over to old age his country delights, he was at that time following a Merlin."—SYDNEY.

> Saving there came a litle "gray" Hawke
> A Merlin him they call,
> Which untill the grounde did strike the grype,
> That dead he downe did fall.
> PERCY—*Sir Aldingar.*

The Merlin is one of the smallest of the Hawks, but it is rapid in flight and of great courage. It is usually a winter visitor, but sometimes stays to breed in Herefordshire. The Rev. Clement Ley has taken its eggs in May, from beneath the heather on the Fwddog mountain. Mr. W. C. Blake says that a pair of Merlins were trapped on the Bishopswood estate in 1883, even to the regret of the keeper himself. It is however a rare bird, and is

not noted as occurring in other districts of the county, except occasionally in the winter. Indeed it may almost be said—

> Now no more our bursting woods
> Hear the swooping Merlins scream.
> BENNETT.

The Merlin feeds chiefly on small birds—Snipes, Larks, Thrushes, and Blackbirds. It will hover over the Snipe Shooter, and give chase to the wounded birds, or to those that escape the guns. It will boldly attack the House Pigeon, and has indeed been trained to hawk Pigeons.

[Genus—TINNUNCULUS.]

[TINNUNCULUS VESPERTINUS—Red-footed Falcon.]

[*Falco vespertinus*—*Yarrell.*]

An occasional visitor to England.

TINNUNCULUS ALAUDARIUS—KESTREL.

[*Falco tinnunculus*—*Yarrell.*]

> As the Wyndhover hangs in the balance.
> TENNYSON—*Aylmer's Field.*

> One they might trust their common wrongs to wreak,
> The Musquel and the Coystrel were too weak.
> DRYDEN—*Hind and Panther.*

The Kestrel, or Windhover, is a constant resident in the county. It is the most common of the Hawks and adds great pleasure to country walks. Its graceful flight, and the way it sustains itself stationary in the air by the rapid movement of its wings, as it hovers over the ground to scan its surface for the mice it delights to feed on, is very interesting to watch. Its chief food is mice, rats, small birds, frogs, and cockchafers. It may now and then take a young Partridge, but it does not deserve the hatred the gamekeepers bestow upon it, for the fault is abundantly condoned

by the great number of mice it destroys. It builds here usually in trees, in the deserted nest of a Crow or a Magpie, but it will also build in rocks, towers, or ruins.

[TINNUNCULUS CENCHRIS—Lesser Kestrel.]

One obtained near York, and another taken alive near Dover, 1877.

GENUS—PANDION.

PANDION HALIAËTUS—OSPREY OR FISHING HAWK.

> True to the season, o'er our sea-beat shore,
> The sailing Osprey high is seen to soar,
> With broad unmoving wing ; and circling slow,
> Marks each loose straggler in the deep below ;
> Sweeps down like lightning ! plunges with a roar !
> And bears his struggling victim to the shore.
>
> A. WILSON—*The Osprey.*

The Sea Eagle, or Fishing Hawk, is rarely to be met with so far inland as Herefordshire. In October, 1879, a beautiful specimen was shot near Fownhope by Mr. V. Collins, of Cubberley, near Ross, and this is the only instance on record of the Osprey having been seen or taken in the county. It is now in the possession of Mr. W. C. Blake, Ross.

The handsome Osprey in the Hereford Museum, was shot at Penybont, in Radnorshire, in May, 1885, by Mr. E. W. Colt-Williams, who kindly presented the bird to the Museum.

In April, 1867, a very fine Osprey was caught in a pole-trap set for Hawks, in a wood on the Clyro estate called Cwm Sir Hugh ; it measured about six feet across the wings, and had a trout, of nearly 3lbs. weight, in its claws when captured. It was set up by Shaw, of Shrewsbury, and is preserved at Clyro Court, the seat of Mr. Baskerville.

These rare birds having been obtained so near to our borders, it is of great interest to mention them.

I think he'll be to Rome,
As is the Osprey to the fish, who takes it,
By sovereignty of nature.
SHAKESPEARE—*Coriolanus, IV., 7.*

Hawk and Osprey screamed for joy.
SCOTT—*Harold.*

She brings us fish—she brings us Spring,
Good times, fair weather, warmth, and plenty,
Fine store of shad, trout, herring, ling,
Sheepshead, and drum, and old wives dainty.
* * * *
"God bless the Fish-hawk, and the Fisher."
A. WILSON—*The Osprey.*

ORDER—STEGANOPODES.

FAMILY—PELECANIDÆ.

GENUS—PHALACROCORAX.

PHALACROCORAX CARBO—CORMORANT.

The hote Cormorant full of gluttonie.
CHAUCER.

And Cormoyrants with birds of ravenous race,
Which still sat wayting on the wastful cliff
For spoil of wrackes.
SPENSER—*Faerie Queene.*

On distant waves the Raven of the sea,
The Cormorant devours her carrion food.
GRAHAME—*Birds of Scotland.*

The greedy Cormorant.
QUARLES—*History of Summer.*

Notwithstanding the hard things said of him by poets, the Great, or Black Cormorant, in its summer plumage, is a very handsome bird. Its crested head, so hoary looking, from the long thin white feathers which project from the dark ones beneath; its hooked beak, the upper mandible being turned sharply down over the lower one; its glossy bronze back, with green or purple metallic tinted edging to the feathers; its white thighs, and its general appearance and size, render it a very remarkable bird. In

autumn and winter, the crest and the white feathers disappear, leaving the bird sufficiently sombre looking to deserve its common name of Black.

The Cormorant has a rank and most disagreeable smell, his voice is hoarse and croaking, his form inelegant, and his qualities base; so that it is no wonder Milton should make Satan assume the form of this bird, to "survey undelighted" the beauties of Paradise; and "sit devising death" on the Tree of Life.

The Great Cormorant, is a very common bird on the sea-coast. Considerable numbers of them collect together at their favourite breeding stations. They seldom come so far inland as Herefordshire, but there are several instances on record of their having done so. A Cormorant was shot on the river Wye, near Ross, in the winter of 1856; on the river Lugg, near Kingsland, in 1859; on the Wye, near Hampton Bishop, in 1876; on a brook at Tarrington, in 1878; and again on the Lugg, near Mordiford, in 1881. The two last birds are in the Hereford Museum.

The Cormorant is a bold intelligent bird, and very easily tamed. It swims rapidly, and catches its prey with the greatest ease, holding the fish with certainty, by means of the sharp hook on the upper mandible. They were formerly trained to catch fish, and bring them to their masters. Charles I. had a "master of Cormorants"; and it is well known that the Chinese have long employed them for this purpose, putting a strap or ring round their necks to prevent them from swallowing any fish themselves, until they have caught sufficient for their master. A gentleman in England, Captain Salvin, has now some trained Cormorants, which he uses for this purpose. They are troublesome creatures, and require careful management.

Captain Salvin gives names to his birds. In Gloucestershire he was fishing with "The Artful Dodger," "Sub-inspector" and "Kao-wang." The latter bird bred in 1881, and this year (1885), he is breeding again, though in his twenty-third year. They are very irregular in changing to the spring or nuptial dress, which

both sexes have alike. "I got a medal at the Fisheries Exhibition" he adds, "for the performances of Kao-wang's son." Captain Salvin's birds are the first that have bred in confinement.

The food of the Cormorant, when wild and at liberty, consists almost entirely of fish; but in confinement they will eat raw meat, mice, birds, and almost any flesh offered them. They eat their food so ravenously, that the very name of "cormorant" has become symbolical of gluttony.

> With eager feeding food doth choke the feeder;
> Light vanity, insatiate Cormorant
> Consuming means, soon preys upon itself.
>
> SHAKESPEARE—*King Richard II., II. 1.*

And again—

> Spite of cormorant devouring time.
>
> SHAKESPEARE—*Love's Labour Lost, I., 1.*

PHALACROCORAX GRACULUS—SHAG.

> The Cormorant on high
> Wheels from the deep and screams along the land.
>
> THOMSON—*Winter.*

The Shag is very like the Black Cormorant; but its smaller size, and the prevailing green colour of its plumage, serve to distinguish it, and have, indeed, given it the name of the Small or Green Cormorant. It is a very rare visitor to Herefordshire. There is but one well-authenticated instance of its coming here. On October 11th, 1876, an uncommon bird was seen to alight, on the louvres of one of the windows in the steeple of All Saints' Church, in the centre of Hereford. It was fired at from the Bowling Green garden, but neither hit nor frightened away. The key of the tower was obtained, and the exhausted bird was knocked down with a pole, while attempting to start on a fresh flight. It was a male bird of the first year, and it is now preserved in

Hereford. Its slaughter was an inhospitable deed; done, too, on a church spire!

> For if a hope of safety rest
> 'Tis on the sacred name of guest,
> Who seeks for shelter, storm distress'd,
> Within a chieftain's hall.
> SCOTT—*The Lord of the Isles.*

GENUS—SULA.

SULA BASSANA—GANNET.

> Wild round their rifted brows, with frequent cry
> As of lament, the Gulls and Gannets fly.
> SCOTT—*To the Duke of Buccleugh.*

The Gannet is a noble bird. His white body, with only the primary feathers of the wing, black; his buff-coloured head and back of the neck; his yellowish eyes, and his sharp-pointed bluish beak; together with his size, make the adult bird very handsome. The Gannet takes four years to attain maturity. He is born covered with a bluish black skin, from which a white down quickly grows, so thick and full, as to make the bird look like a powder-puff, or a ball of cotton; from this down, black feathers protrude, which become mottled with white, until eventually, the white plumage of the adult bird appears.

The Gannet is a constant resident on our coasts, and is widely distributed until the breeding season, when they congregate in many well-known localities, which they always frequent year after year. It is a long-lived bird; and "a resident at the Bass Rock" says Mr. Selby (as quoted by Yarrell) "has recognised certain individuals, from particular and well-known marks, as invariably returning to the same spot to breed, for upwards of forty years.

Gannets fly long distances, and frequent a wide range of sea-coast, being invariably attendant on the herring tribe. Their appearance off the Cornish coast is welcomed by the fishermen,

for they announce the approach of the pilchards, and their movements show the course the shoal is taking. The Gannet feeds entirely on fish. The birds seize their prey by dropping down upon them suddenly from the air, and seldom miss their aim. So closely indeed do the birds follow the fish, that they frequently get entangled and caught in the long sea nets of the fishermen.

The Gannet is very rarely seen in Herefordshire. There is only one recorded instance of its occurrence. A young Gannet, in its first year's grey plumage, was found by a cottager near Peterchurch, in 1881. It was in a very exhausted state, and was caught alive, and kept on meat and herrings for some six weeks, when it died. The bird was stuffed, and is now in the possession of the Rev. T. Prosser Powell, of Peterchurch.

[Genus—PELECANUS.]

[PELECANUS ONOCROTALUS—White Pelican.]

One shot in Horsey Fen, May, 1863, probably an escape, but bones have been exhumed more than once from the Norfolk fens.

ORDER—HERODIONES.

FAMILY—ARDEIDÆ.

GENUS—ARDEA.

ARDEA CINEREA—HERON.

Unhappy bird! our fathers' prime delight,
Who fenced thine eyry round with sacred laws;
No mighty princes now disdain to wear
Thy waving crest, the mark of high command.
SOMERVILLE—*Field Sports.*

Long-necked Heron, dread of nimble eels.
LEYDEN—*Albania.*

Grey swamps and pools, waste places of the Hern.
TENNYSON—*Enid.*

The Heron is not infrequent in the more secluded parts of our Herefordshire brooks and rivers; a companion, and rival to the solitary angler. The Heron is a stately, graceful bird, and as he stands motionless in shallow water, with his attention riveted on the stream, and his beak pointed towards it, ready to seize his prey the instant it appears, he forms a most beautiful and picturesque object in the landscape, and one the artist delights to introduce on his canvas.

> Stock-still upon that stone, from day to day,
> I see thee watch the river for thy prey.
> —Yes, I'm the tyrant there; but when I rise,
> The well-trained Falcon braves me in the skies;
> Then comes the tug of war, of strength and skill;
> He dies, impaled on my up-darted bill;
> Or, powerless in his grasp, my doom I meet;
> Dropt, as a trophy, at his master's feet.
>
> MONTGOMERY—*Birds.*

The Heron was formerly considered royal game. It was encouraged for the ancient sport of falconry, and was protected by severe penal statutes.

> So lords, with sport of stag and and Heron full,
> Sometimes we see.
>
> SIDNEY.

Anyone who presumed to take or destroy its eggs, incurred a penalty of twenty shillings, a very heavy penalty in those days. By a statute of Henry VIII. the taking of Herons, except by hawking or the long bow, was prohibited under the penalty of half a mark, and the theft of a young bird from the nest was ten shillings. It was then a favourite dish for the table, not less esteemed than the Bustard or the Peacock.

The Heron has now been left, for many years past, to depend for safety on its own sagacity. In winter, when it is more solitary, it is wary, shy, and watchful against danger; but at the breeding season, the birds can be much more readily approached, and their rapidly diminishing numbers are doubtless due to their slaughter at this time. Cheap guns and gunpowder have been very fatal to Herons. A wounded Heron is a dangerous bird to approach. With his long neck and sharp beak, he can quickly strike a dangerous blow, and as he aims at the eyes, if the stroke is not

avoided, it is certain blindness, and may actually cause death to the unfortunate receiver.

The food of the Heron consists principally of any kind of fish, eels, frogs, water-rats, and the young of waterfowl, if it gets the opportunity of seizing them. It frequents shallow water to seek its food, for though it can swim if it pleases, it very seldom does so. The Heron is especially fond of the eel,

> The eles for the Heroune.
> CHAUCER.

and is very successful in catching them. When the eel is large, the Heron deliberately walks to the shore to beat it against the ground before attempting to swallow it.

Herons are gregarious at the breeding season, and in Herefordshire build on oaks, firs, beech, and elm trees. Like the Rooks, they occupy the trees for the spring and summer; then, only visit them occasionally, and leave them altogether for the two or three months of severe weather in winter.

Within comparatively recent times there were several Heronries in Herefordshire. At the beginning of this century, there was one on the fine elms at the Moor, within a mile of the centre of the city of Hereford. It dwindled down to a single pair of birds, which built for the last time about the year 1810. There was also a large Heronry on the elm trees at Newcourt, Lugwardine, within three miles of the city; and some few remained there until 1853. There was also another small Heronry, at the beginning of the century, in the centre of the county, at the Marsh Farm, Eaton Bishop.

In early days, there was a considerable colony of Herons occupying some tall oak trees on the north-west side of Brampton Bryan Park, but this was broken up in the troublous times

> When civil dudgeon first grew high,

in the reign of Charles I. The trees were felled, and the Herons sought another home.

At Willey Lodge, near Lingen, at the beginning of the present century, a large number of Herons, considerably over a hundred families, occupied a grove of lofty oaks, and they remained there up to the year 1836, when the trees were felled. These birds were believed to have gone to Plowden, near Bishop's Castle, from the great increase in the number of Herons that took place there just at that time.

A large Heronry existed in the Hawkswood, at the Moor, near Hay, where a considerable number of Herons built on some tall oak trees. This Heronry was in the immediate vicinity of a Rookery, and here might be seen in spring, a curious border warfare between these very different birds, for the possession of some particular tree. This Heronry was numerously occupied, up to the year 1852, when a large fall of timber disturbed the birds. In the year 1856, there were still about a dozen nests, but the number of Herons gradually diminished, until they were reduced to a single pair, which built there in 1863 for the last time.

Single pairs of Herons have nested in many parts of the county of late years, but have been too much disturbed to remain. A pair of Herons built at Free Town, Stoke Edith, in 1876, but the nest was robbed, in spite of the farmer, who wished to protect them. Another pair built on the side of the canal, between Ashperton and Bosbury, on the Canon Frome estate in 1881, but again the nest was robbed of its eggs, and the birds left. In the years 1880, and 1881, a pair of Herons built and reared their young, in a copse on the Church House Farm, near Moreton Court; they returned on the following year, but some neighbouring trees had been cut down, and they did not remain. A few years since, a single pair of Herons built on a tree near the river Wye in the parish of Fownhope. In 1883, Mr. Pitt, of Free Town, saw in the parish of Stoke Edith, four young Herons, which had recently left the nest somewhere in that neighbourhood.

The Heronries existing at the present time in Herefordshire, are reduced to two; one at Berrington, near Leominster, and the

other at Letton Court. The Woolhope Club visited the Heronry situated on the island on the large pool in Berrington Park, on June 9, 1884, and found, that there were from fifteen to twenty nests on some tall larch, fir, and beech trees. The foliage on the trees prevented the possibility of counting the nests, but the keeper stated, that he counted forty Herons on their return in the spring, after their usual winter absence to their wood-surrounded pool—

> Old woods whose reverend echoes wake,
> When the Heron screams along the distant lake.
>
> ROGERS—*Captivity.*

The other small Heronry is situated on the horse-shoe bend of the river Wye at Letton, where there have been two or three nests, for some years, built on some spruce fir trees. Last year (1884), and this year (1885), the keeper states that five families have nested there. It is a most interesting sight to watch the birds on their nests, with the aid of a telescope, from the drawing-room at Letton Court. Here, too, the Rooks have invaded the trees, and the usual squabbles between the birds occur every spring. It is to be feared, as has often happened elsewhere, that in the end the Herons will be driven away. At Letton, however, last year (1884), the keeper states that no less than sixteen young birds were reared there. It is pleasant to know that both Lord Rodney, and the Rev. Henry Blisset, are anxious to protect their Heronries; and it is hoped, that the required licence to carry a gun, will also tend to save them from destruction.

> The Partridge loves the fruitful fells;
> The Plover loves the mountains;
> The Woodcock haunts the lonely dells;
> The soaring Hern the fountains.
>
> BURNS—*Song.*

> In the wide, rush-grown pool, upon the lands,
> Like a dark soul that some forgotten crime
> Has struck to hopeless gloom, a Heron stands,
> A silent shadow, grey and gaunt as Time.
>
> D. W. R.

Waterfowl are always restless before rain and wind, as Virgil has noted; (Georg. I., 368), and he specially mentions the Heron.

Notasque paludes
Deserit atque altam supra volat ardea nubem.

The Heron leaves his swampy shores
And high above the clouds he soars.

Bacon echoes this opinion and says: "the Heron when she soareth high, showeth wind."

[ARDEA PURPUREA—Purple Heron.]
A rare straggler to the South of England.

[ARDEA ALBA—Great White Heron.]
Of accidental occurrence in Britain.

[ARDEA GARZETTA—Little Egret.]
Has occurred several times in the British Islands.

[ARDEA BUBULCUS—Buff-backed Heron.]
Three times in the south of England.

ARDEA RALLOIDES—SQUACCO HERON.

This beautiful little Heron, a native of the South Western parts of Asia, and of Egypt and Nubia, is but a very occasional summer migrant to the British Islands. There is no doubt that it has visited Herefordshire. One specimen, is said to have been shot on "the Lugg, at Sutton," but neither date nor authority is given for it.

The following instance, however, is beyond dispute. In the summer of 1873, at the Old Weir, on the river Wye, five miles above Hereford, Mr. Thomas Jowett saw a small flock of five birds with snow-white plumage, flying over the river. He got his gun, and by a very long shot succeeded in winging one of them, which

dropped in the river. It floated down the stream, and a chase after it began with great energy and enthusiasm;

> Not dead, not yet quite dead?
> I that am cruel, am yet merciful;
> I would not have thee linger in thy pain.
> SHAKESPEARE—*Othello V., 2.*

By wading boldly, the bird was at length caught, killed, and sent to Mr. Ward, of Wigmore Street, London. He recognised its rarity, and wrote to have another specimen shot. The four birds remained in the neighbourhood for eight or nine days longer, and although Mr. Jowett tried his utmost to get another shot at them, he was unable to do so. They usually passed their time in the neighbouring trees, and fed very early and late, on the gravel and mud banks of the river. One bird was always on the watch, from a tree top, whilst the others fed; and on the approach of any intruder, a "scrawk" from the sentinel started them off immediately. The stuffed specimen is now in the possession of Mr. Jowett.

A very fine specimen of the Squacco Heron was shot on the river Wye, on May 3rd, 1867, by Mr. Hotchkis, who was staying at Clyro Court. It was carefully preserved, and is in the possession of Mr. Baskerville.

GENUS—ARDETTA.

ARDETTA MINUTA—LITTLE BITTERN.

> Even as the savage sits . . . .
> . . . . . and hears
> The Bittern booming in the reed, he shrinks
> From the dismaying solitude.
> KIRKE WHITE—*Time.*

This rare summer visitor is reported to have been shot in Herefordshire. The Rev. F. O. Morris, in his "British Birds," states that a specimen was shot at Shobdon Court, the seat of Lord Bateman, in the spring of 1838. The late Mr. Walcot, of Worcester, had in his collection of birds, a fine specimen of a male bird shot in Herefordshire. These are, however, the only instances recorded of its occurrence in this county.

Genus—NYCTICORAX.

NYCTICORAX GRISEUS—Night-Heron.

The Night-Heron has a wide range of habitat. It is known in all the four quarters of the globe, but it is an extremely rare visitor to the British Isles. Its nocturnal habits may possibly sometimes screen it from observation, but so far as is known, it has not occurred here much more than a dozen times. The specimen in the Hereford Museum, was formerly in the collection of the late Mr. Moss, of Ross, and is labelled "Backney Marsh," a marsh situated about two miles from Ross, but nothing further is known about it.

Genus—BOTAURUS.

BOTAURUS STELLARIS—Bittern.

The busying Bittern sits, which through his hollow bill
A sudden bellowing sounds, which many times doth fill
The neighbouring marsh with noyse, as though a bull did roare.
Drayton—*Polyolbion.*

The Bittern booming in the reeds.
Kirke White—*Time.*

"The poor fish have enemies enough, besides such unnatural fishermen as Otters, the Cormorant, and the Bittern."—Isaac Walton.

The Bittern sounds his drum
Booming from the sedgy shallows.
Scott—*Lady of the Lake.*

The Bittern lone that shakes the hollow ground,
While through still midnight groans the hollow sound.
A. Wilson—*Loch Winnock.*

The loud Bittern from his bulrush home
Gave from the salt ditch side the bellowing boom.
Crabbe—*Peter Grimes.*

The startling boom of the Bittern is rarely to be heard in England at the present time. It was moderately plentiful at the beginning of the present century in Herefordshire, in the waste land, and marshy districts of the county; but of late years, it has rarely been met with. It is a shy bird, concealing itself by day

amongst the beds of reeds, rushes, flags, or other rank, aquatic vegetation, to come out with the shades of evening to seek its food. The strange, booming, bellowing cry of the Bittern, when heard across the marsh as night approaches, is not easily mistaken. It is a love note of peculiar harshness, and seems to make the ground itself vibrate; but when the bird is suddenly flushed by day, it makes a sharp cry on rising, not unlike that of the Wild Goose.

> From the green marshes of the stagnant brook
> The Bittern's sullen shout the sedges shook.
> SCOTT.

The Bittern was formerly much esteemed on the table. Its flesh resembles that of the leveret in colour, with a wild-fowl flavour. When struck down either by a Hawk, or with the gun, it is very fierce, throwing itself on its back, so as to make it very dangerous to the dog or man who approaches it.

Many specimens of the Bittern exist in houses throughout Herefordshire, killed since the beginning of the century. The latest well authenticated instances are: one killed from the moat of Bronshill Castle, beyond Eastnor, in 1854, which is now in the Hereford Museum; one killed at Backney Marsh, near Ross, in 1854; one killed by the late Mr. Griffiths, of Newcourt, at Staunton-on-Wye, in 1861, and now in the possession of Sir Henry Cotterell; one shot on Staunton Common a few weeks after (1861) by Mr. Pearce, of Calver Hill, Norton Canon. It was the male bird, and notwithstanding that it had a broken wing, it fought so desperately, that it was only secured with difficulty. A Bittern was shot at Sellack, near Ross, in 1880, and brought to the Free Library for identification; and the Rev. Morgan Watkins mentions another that was killed at Dulas, on April 10th, 1887. Some other single birds are reported as having been killed within the last few years on the river Lugg, at Shobdon, Backney Marsh, and elsewhere.

Mr. Done, of the Moor, near Hay, says that a Bittern was seen there alive by his keeper, in the spring of 1885.

> No more the screaming Bittern, bellowing harsh,
> To the dark bottom shakes the shuddering marsh.
> LEYDEN.—*Scenes of Infancy.*

[Botaurus lentiginosus—American Bittern.]
Has occurred several times in British Isles.

[Family—Ciconiidæ.]
[Genus—Ciconia.]
[Ciconia alba—White Stork.]
An occasional visitant.

[Ciconia nigra—Black Stork.]
An occasional straggler.

[Family—Plataleidæ.]
[Genus—Platalea.]
[Platalea leucorodia—Spoonbill.]
A rare straggler now, but formerly bred in the British Isles.

[Genus—Plegadis.]
[Plegadis falcinellus—Glossy Ibis.]
A rare straggler.

Order—ANSERES.
Family—ANATIDÆ.
[Genus—Plectropterus.]
[Plectropterus gambensis—Spur-Winged Goose.]
One in Scotland, three in England, probably escapes.

[Genus—Chenalopex.]
[Chenalopex ægyptiacus—Egyptian Goose.]
Said to have occurred in Herefordshire, but probably an escape.

Genus—ANSER.
[Anser cinereus—Grey Lag Goose.]
Breeds in Scotland, visiting England in the winter.

ANSER SEGETUM—Bean-Goose.

Ranged in figure (Wild Geese) wedge their way
. . . . . and set forth
Their airy caravan on high over seas
Flying, and over lands with mutual wing
Easing their flight.

Milton.

The Bean-Goose is one of the most common and numerous of the Wild Grey Geese which visit the British Isles during the winter months. It sometimes remains to breed in the north of Scotland. It is very common on the Norwegian coast, and in Sweden. Flocks of the Bean-Goose not unfrequently pass over Herefordshire, but they seldom stay to rest here. Mr. Lingwood records it in his List of Herefordshire Birds; and there is a specimen in the Hereford Museum, which was shot by Mr. F. R. James on the Wye, at Mordiford, in 1881.

In India, the Goose is the symbol of sleepless vigilance, and Wild Geese are so difficult to approach, that the expression "A Wild Goose chase" has become proverbial for an unsuccessful enterprise.

Nor watch dogs, nor the yet more wakeful Geese,
Disturb with nightly noise the sacred peace.

Dryden.

The consecrated Geese in orders,
That to the Capitol were warders,
For being then upon patrol,
With noise alone beat off the Gaul.

Butler—*Hudibras.*

ANSER BRACHYRHYNCHUS—Pink-footed Goose.

If he be free
Why then, my taxing like the Wild Goose flies
Unclaim'd of any man.

Shakespeare—*As you like it, II., 7.*

If thy wits run the wild goose chase
I've done.

Shakespeare—*Romeo and Juliet, II., 4.*

This Goose is smaller than the Bean-Goose. It frequents the same localities, and is known by the rosy, pink colour of its

legs and feet, and by the shortness of its neck. In severe winters the flocks are sometimes very numerous, and they become plentiful in the London poulterers' shops.

Sir, your pennyworth is good, an your Goose be fat.
SHAKESPEARE—*Love's Labour Lost, III., 1.*

It is not often met with in Herefordshire. One was killed on the Wye, near Moccas, in the winter of 1879-80, and brought to Mr. Newman, the bird stuffer, in Hereford, to set up.

Another specimen was shot near the Lugg Mills, about two miles from Hereford, in December, 1880. It is now in the Hereford Museum.

ANSER ALBIFRONS—WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE.

Nay, I am for all waters.
SHAKESPEARE—*Twelfth Night, IV., 2.*

The Laughing, or White-fronted Goose, is the common Goose of Lapland. It is so named from its note, which resembles a man's laugh. The Indians imitate the call of this Goose by patting the mouth quickly with the hands, whilst uttering the word "wah." It is a regular winter visitant to the British Isles, but seldom stops to break its journey in Herefordshire. There is only one instance of its having been killed here; that was at the Weir Cliff, on January 23rd, 1885, by Mr. W. Deakin, who presented the bird to the Hereford Museum.

Thou cream-faced loon!
Where got'st thou that goose look?
SHAKESPEARE—*Macbeth, V., 3.*

[ANSER INDICUS—Bar-headed Goose.]
Once on the river Dee, but probably an escape.

[ANSER CYGNOIDES—Chinese Goose.]
Frequently kept on ornamental waters, whence they escape.

|Genus—CHEN].

[CHEN ALBATUS—Cassin's Snow Goose.]

Four have been killed at different times in Ireland.

GENUS—BERNICLA.

BERNICLA BRENTA—BRENT GOOSE.

There swims no Goose so grey, but soon or late
She finds some honest Gander for her mate.
POPE—*Wife of Bath.*

This is the smallest and most numerous of the Wild Geese, which visit this county every winter. It is a marine species, and is seldom seen on fresh water in the interior. They spend the greater part of their time on the sea, feeding on laver and other drift weed, but frequent the muddy flats and sand bars on the sea-shore at ebb-tide. They are excellent eating, and in severe winters the London shops are well supplied with them.

A large flock of Brent Geese was seen on the river Wye, near Brobury, in the winter of 1879; and one was shot on the river at Ross, in 1882, which is now in the possession of Mr. W. C. Blake, of that town.

BERNICLA LEUCOPSIS—BARNACLE GOOSE.

The noisy Geese that gabbled o'er the pool.
GOLDSMITH—*Deserted Village.*

This handsome Goose is a regular winter visitor to the British Isles, but it has very seldom been met with in Herefordshire. The only clear record is of one, a female, in full plumage, which was shot from a pool at Llangannock, St. Weonards, by Mr. T. L. Mayos, of that village, and it is now in his possession.

Geese are singularly sensitive of changes of weather, and are natural rural barometers to those who can interpret their ways, as Akenside has noticed:—

Grave, unwieldy inmates of the pool,
The changing seasons of the sky proclaim,
Sun, cloud, or shower.

Pleasures of Imagination.

Our forefathers were much perplexed to decide, whether these Geese were fowl or fish. They rather inclined to class them with fish, because they were believed to emerge from the barnacles which encrust old timber, and hulls of ships. One old herbal contains a marvellous picture of a dead tree with many branches, thickly studded with barnacles, from which small Geese are coming out full fledged; and the writer tells us that "the fish which is hatched therefrom is in shape and habit like a bird."

As barnacles turn Solan Geese
In th' islands of the Orcades.

BUTLER—*Hudibras.*

BERNICLA CANADENSIS—CANADA GOOSE.

The Canada Goose is not often met with in its wild state in England.

Its home is in North America, Greenland, and Spitzbergen, but it is drawn south in very severe winters. Various instances are recorded of flocks having been seen in different counties of England, but until the winter of 1885-6, there is no record of the birds having been noticed in Herefordshire. On the 24th January, 1886, two flocks of large Geese were observed in the Wye meadows, about a mile below Wilton Bridge. They attracted much attention, and took flight in the direction of Goodrich. The number of birds in one flock was estimated by several observers to be twenty-three, the smaller flock was only five; but they were feeding at no great distance apart, and appeared to be all of one species.

The following day, Mr. H. Preece, of Ash Farm, Pencraig, was informed that a large flock of Geese was in the Wye meadows, near Goodrich, so he immediately went in search of the birds. He was not fortunate enough to meet with the larger flock, which was judged to be over twenty, but the smaller flock of five was quietly

swimming down the river. Being alarmed, the Geese took wing, when Mr. Preece fired, and brought one to the ground. It proved to be a fine male, weighing 10lbs. 10 ounces; 4 ounces heavier than the heaviest male recorded by the Rev. F. O. Morris. The birds of the larger flock were noticed as having black necks, with a patch of white across the face. This band of white extending round the upper part of the neck, and terminating over the eye, has earned for the Canada Goose the name of the "*Cravat Goose.*"

The specimen secured by Mr. H. Preece is in the possession of Mr. W. C. Blake, of Ross, who has kindly furnished the interesting notice of the occurrence of this rare species in Herefordshire. The very severe weather in the north of Europe and America probably drove the birds to our shores. The flock left the neighbourhood, without being further thinned.

Mr. Morris cites the appearance of the Canada Goose in but few English counties (chiefly coast ones), and at rather long intervals. They are more regular visitants to some of the more secluded lochs of Scotland.

The following interesting quotation is from "*Wilson's Ornithology*":—

"This is the common Goose of the United States, universally "known over the whole country, whose regular periodical mi- "grations are the sure signals of returning spring, or approaching "winter. It is highly probable that they extend their migrations "under the very pole itself, amid the silent desolation of unknown "countries, shut out since the creation from the prying eyes of "man, by everlasting, and insuperable barriers of ice.

"That such places abound with their food, we cannot for "a moment doubt, while the absence of their great destroyer, man, "and the splendours of a perpetual day, may render such regions, "most suitable for their purpose."

[BERNICLA RUFICOLLIS—Red-breasted Goose.]

A rare straggler to Britain.

Genus—CYGNUS.

CYGNUS OLOR—Mute Swan.

The swan with arched neck
Between her white wings mantling, proudly rows
Her state with oary feet.

Milton.

See how yon Swans with snowy pride elate,
Arch their high necks, and sail along in state.

Broom—*Pastoral.*

Graceful and smooth and still,
As the male Swan, that floats adown the stream,
Or on the waters of the unruffled lake
Anchors her placid beauty.

Wordsworth—*Excursion.*

The Swan is a native of the eastern parts of Europe and Asia, and the southern parts of Russia and Siberia. It is said to have been introduced into England by Richard I., who brought it from Cyprus. It is now a thoroughly naturalised British bird, and every piece of ornamental water demands its graceful presence. It is the largest of our birds, and the most elegant and pleasing to the eye. "What in nature," exclaims Bewick, "can be more beautiful than the grassy-margined lake, hung round with the varied foliage of the grove, when contrasted with the pure resplendent whiteness of the majestic Swan, wafted along with erected plumes by the gentle breeze, or floating, reflected on the glassy surface of the water, while he throws himself into numberless graceful attitudes, as if desirous of attracting the admiration of the spectator."

The Swan on still Saint Mary's Lake
Floats double, Swan and shadow!

The Mute Swan is known by its reddish orange beak, with a black base, and a knob called the berry, immediately below the forehead; its pure white plumage, and its black legs and feet form a noticeable contrast.

All the water in the ocean
Can never turn a Swan's black legs to white.

Shakespeare. *Tit. And., IV., 2.*

The male bird in swan language is called "a cob," and the female "a pen." The cygnets when young are of a dark bluish grey colour, lighter beneath, and the feathers are greyish brown. After the

second moult very little grey plumage remains. At two years old they are quite white, and they breed the third year.

Swans live to a great age. Marked Swans on the Thames have been known to live for 50 years.

> After many a summer dies the Swan.
> TENNYSON—*Tithonus.*

They are very careful of their young, and, though generally good-tempered and docile, when they are breeding—

> The peaceful monarch of the lake,

as the poets delight to call him, becomes very pugnacious and savage, the terror of all who approach him. The female will often give the cygnets a ride on her back, but if danger arises, like the domestic fowl she takes them under her wings.

> So doth the Swan her downy cygnets save,
> Keeping them prisoners underneath her wings.
> SHAKESPEARE—*I. King Henry VI., V. 3.*

The Mute Swan has a soft, low voice, with but little variety in it. It is not disagreeable, but

> The Swan's wild music by the Iceland lake.
> MRS. HEMANS.

is not often heard.

Homer delights in the Swan, and tells us how

> They o'er the windings of Cayster's springs
> Stretch their long necks, and clap their rustling wings;
> Now tower aloft and course in airy rounds,
> Now light with noise; with noise the field resounds.
> POPE—*Iliad 2.*

Classical history connects the Swan with the God of Music, and hence poems of song have often been attributed to it. The Swan was consecrated to Apollo and the Muses, and was believed to derive the power of foretelling his death from Apollo, the God of Prophecy and Divination. "They become prophetic," says Plato *(Phaedo)*, "and foreseeing the happiness which they shall enjoy in another state, are in greater ecstacy than they have before experienced," and he attributes it to the same sort of ecstacy, that good men sometimes enjoy at that awful hour.

That Swans sang sweetly at the approach of death was, however, a popular idea from very early times. Callimachus, in his hymn upon the Island of Delos, says :—

When from Pactolus' golden banks
Apollo's tuneful songsters, snowy Swans,
Steering their flight, seven times their circling course
Wheel round the island, carolling mean time
Soft melody, the favourites of the Nine,
Thus ushering to birth with dulcet sounds
The God of Harmony and Sense, sev'n strings
Hereafter to his golden lyre he gave,
For ere the eighth soft concert was begun
He sprung to birth.
Dod's *Callimachus*, p. 115.

Æschylus alludes to the death-song of the Swan in his "Agamemnon," where Clytemnestra, speaking of Cassandra, says :—

She, like the Swan
Expiring, dies in melody.

Shakespeare repeats the idea—

I will play the Swan
And die in music.
—*Othello, V., 2.*

Tennyson tells us how the dying Swan "loudly did lament"—

With an inner voice the river ran,
Adown it floated a dying Swan,
And loudly did lament
* * * * * * *
The Wild Swan's death-hymn took the soul
Of that waste place with joy
Hidden in sorrow: at first to the ear
The warble was low, and full and clear ;
And floating about the under sky,
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach stole
Sometimes afar, and sometimes near ;
But anon her awful jubilant voice
With a music strange and manifold,
Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold.

and numerous other similar allusions might be given.

By the Pythagorean doctrine of the Transmigration of Souls, the bodies of Swans were allotted to departed poets. Thus Plato makes Orpheus prefer the life of the Swan. Poets were said to animate Swans, also, from the notion that they fly higher than any other birds; thus Hesiod distinguishes them by the epithet of

The lofty-flying Swans.

In course of time the Swan became the common trope for a bard: Horace calls Pindar "Dircæum cygnum;" and in one of

his odes even supposes himself to be changed into a Swan. Virgil speaks of his poetical brethren in the same way,

> Vare tuum nomen
> Cantantes sublime ferent ad sidera cygni.
> —*Ecl.*, *IX.*

But like a true naturalist, when speaking of the birds he lays aside fiction, and gives them their real note,

> Dant sonitum rauci per stagna loquacia cygni.
> —*Æneid.*, *Lib. X.*, *1.*

Swans in severe winters, have been many times observed flying over this county, and sometimes stop for a time on the rivers Wye and Lugg, and on some of the larger ponds of the county. They are at all times very difficult to approach, but instances are known of their having been killed here.

There is much of history, as well as of poetry, attached to the Swan, for which reference must be made to the pages of Yarrell. An interesting summary is given there of the rights of Swan keeping; the Acts of Parliament relating to them; and the mode of marking the birds, which dates back for a very long period.

> A fat Swan loved he, best of eny roost.
> CHAUCER—*Prologue.*

[CYGNUS IMMUTABILIS—Polish Swan.]

An occasional migrant.

CYGNUS MUSICUS—WHOOPER SWAN.

> Behold the mantling spirit of reserve,
> Fashions his neck into a goodly curve.
> MANT.

The Wild Whooper, Elk, or Whistling Swan, as it is variously called, owes its name to the peculiar note the birds make, as they arrive in flocks, flying wedge-shaped, like Geese, and which sound when heard in the air, at a distance, is thought to be melodious. It is a winter visitor, and the flocks are generally larger as the weather becomes more severe. The Whooper Swan has the end of its beak black, whilst the base is quadrangular and yellow. It is not so large

as the Mute Swan; it varies very much in weight, but an average bird would weigh not less than eighteen or twenty pounds. Its food, says Meyer, consists of green vegetable matter, grain and fruit, insects and their larvæ, frogs, worms, and the fry of small fishes. It seeks its food by preference in shallow water, turning up the ground to obtain roots and worms.

Herefordshire is out of the usual flight of Whooper Swans, but occasionally a straggling visitor comes to us.

Mr. Lingwood, in his Notes, says of this bird: "Shot on the Wye, near Ross, by Mr. Arthur Armitage, in 1854." This bird was sent to the late Dr. Jebb's gardener, at Peterstow, to be stuffed.

The Whooper Swan has also been noticed on the river Teme.

[CYGNUS AMERICANUS—American Swan.]
Once seen in Scotland.

[CYGNUS BUCCINATOR—Trumpeter Swan.]
Very doubtful.

[CYGNUS BEWICKI—Bewick's Swan.]
Of frequent occurrence in severe winters.

GENUS—TADORNA.

TADORNA CORNUTA—COMMON SHELDRAKE.

> The sleeping Shell-ducks at the sound arise,
> And utter loud their inharmonious cries;
> Fluttering, they move their weedy beds among,
> Or, instant diving, hide their plumeless young.
>
> CRABBE—*Amusements.*

This very beautiful Duck is common on most of our coasts, and is resident throughout the year. It is very well known, since it is always to be seen on the ornamental pieces of water in Zoological gardens, and other public places. It frequents flat shores, sandy

bars, and links, and in the breeding season the flocks collect together, and breed in the rabbit holes amongst the sand hills of the coast. They are hence called "Burrow Ducks," and their nests are often eight or ten feet from the entrance. By noting the footmarks of the birds at the entrance of the hole, their nests are found, and the eggs taken and set under hens, and thus the young ducklings are procured, and reared for taming on ornamental ponds. The Sheldrake is very active. He walks and runs almost as well as the Gulls, and flies more easily and lightly than any other Ducks. His food consists chiefly of shell-fish, small fishes, spawn, sandhoppers, sea worms, marine insects, and sea-weed. The note is a shrill whistle. The Duck is very wary, and not easily approached until half starved by the freezing of the shell-fish. They are not much sought after, however, for their flesh is dark in colour, and unpleasant in smell and flavour.

The Sheldrake is rarely seen inland, but after stormy, severe weather, they are sometimes met with in Herefordshire. The two specimens in the Museum were shot in the Wye; one at Moccas in 1879, and the other at Whitney in 1882.

[TADORNA CASARCA—Ruddy Sheldrake.]

A rare visitor.

[Genus—ÆX.]

[ÆX SPONSA—Summer Duck.]

An escape.

GENUS—MARECA.

MARECA PENELOPE—WIGEON.

Fled the Wigeon from the stream.
BENNETT.

The Wigeon is an excellent bird on the table, and since immense numbers visit this country every winter, it is a valuable

species. They are amongst the earliest to appear in Autumn. By the end of September they begin to come, and large flocks continue to arrive until the weather becomes very severe. They are widely distributed, and not only frequent the shores all round the coast, but are to be met with on the lakes and rivers in the interior of the country. Great numbers are caught in the decoys, and find a ready sale, at the moderate prices at which they are often offered. They feed almost entirely on grass, which accounts for the delicacy of their flavour.

The Wigeon is best known in Herefordshire on the carts of the wild-fowl sellers, but the birds are to be seen most winters, on the upper reaches of the river Wye, and have often been shot on this, and the other rivers and ponds in the county.

[MARECA AMERICANA—American Wigeon.]
Five or six specimens have been killed.

GENUS—DAFILA.

DAFILA ACUTA—PINTAIL.

Why, ye tenants of the lake,
For me your wat'ry haunt forsake ?
* * * * *
Swiftly seek, on clanging wings,
Other lakes and other springs.
BURNS—*On Scaring Waterfowl.*

This elegant Duck, when in its summer plumage, is very pretty and ornamental. It is a regular winter visitor, arriving early in October, and remaining until spring. It is one of the best ducks for the table, and is therefore gladly welcomed in the decoy. It frequents the coasts, and large lakes of the interior of the country. It is not often met with on the Wye, but has been shot there on several occasions. Three were hanging at a fishmonger's shop in Hereford in 1878, having been killed on the Wye at Whitney ; and two were also killed above Whitney in 1880.

Genus—ANAS.

ANAS BOSCAS—Wild Duck.

[*Mallard—Yarrell.*]

High o'er the restless deep, above the reach
Of gunner's hope, vast flights of Wild Ducks stretch
Far as the eye can glance on either side,
In a broad space and level line they glide.
All in their wedge-like figures from the north
Day after day, flight after flight, go forth.

Crabbe—*The Borough.*

Ye Duck and Drake, wi' airy wheels, circling the lake.

Burns—*Elegy.*

Large flocks of Wild Ducks visit the British Isles every winter; and although they are said with good reason to have been much more abundant formerly, immense numbers are still captured in the decoys specially made for them; and are also shot by sportsmen all over the country. The greater number depart in spring for more northern latitudes, but many remain to breed in such suitable places as still exist in the country.

O'er the fen the Wild Duck brood
Their early way are winging.

J. Baillie—*Song.*

The Wild Duck is an early breeder. It makes its nest in hedgerows, or bushes, sometimes at a considerable distance from the water. Occasionally it builds on pollard trees, or ivied walls many feet above the ground level. The Duck covers her eggs on leaving the nest. The food of the Wild Duck consists of worms, slugs, insects, grain, seed, starwort, grass, water-crowfoot, tadpoles, and small fish.

The change of plumage of the Wild Duck has been minutely described by Waterton. He notices the assumption of the sober colours of the Ducks, by the Mallard during the breeding season; and the gradual restoration of its own. "By the 10th of October, the Drake will appear again in all his rich magnificence of dress, than which, scarcely anything throughout the whole wide field of nature can be seen more lovely, or better arranged to charm the eye of man."

Proud of his shining breast and emerald crown,
The Wild Drake leaves his bed of eider-down,
Stretches his helming neck before the gales,
And sails on winnowing wings for other vales.
LEYDEN—*Scenes of Infancy.*

Wild Ducks breed in several places in Herefordshire, when they are encouraged and protected; but places suitable for them are becoming more and more scarce.

The welcome margin of some rush-grown pool,
The Wild Duck's lovely haunt, whose jealous eye
Guards every point, and sits prepared to fly.
BLOOMFIELD—*Autumn.*

There was formerly, so late as the beginning of the present century, a decoy close to the great pool in Shobdon Park, on the left-hand side of the road to Presteign.

[Genus—CHAULELASMUS.]

[CHAULELASMUS STREPERUS—Gadwall.]

[*Anas strepera—Yarrell.*]

Occurs sparingly on the coasts.

GENUS—QUERQUEDULA.

QUERQUEDULA CIRCIA—GARGANEY.

The Summer Teal, as the Garganey is also called, is a rare visitor to Herefordshire. A specimen was killed on the Wye in the summer of 1882, between Moccas and Canonbridge, and was brought to Mr. Newman, the bird-stuffer in Hereford, to be set up. The Duck is intermediate in size between the Teal, and the Wigeon. The Drake is beautifully marked, but is not so bright in colour as the Mallard, or Common Teal.

[QUERQUEDULA DISCORS—Blue-winged Teal.]

Once in Scotland.

QUERQUEDULA CRECCA—Common Teal.

The noisy Goose, the Teal in blackening trains,
The long-bill'd Snipe, that knows approaching rains.
A. Wilson—*Loch Winnoch.*

From the lake has gone the Teal.
Bennett.

Immense flocks of Teal visit this country every autumn and winter, returning again, for the most part, in the spring, to breed in more northerly regions. They begin to arrive about the end of September, and continue to come in successive flocks throughout the winter. They frequent the coasts, and almost all inland lakes, pools, rivers, and streams. Great numbers are caught in the decoys all through the winter, and they meet with a ready sale, for they are considered one of the best Wild-Fowl for the table.

The Teal is the smallest of all the Wild Ducks. It is very prettily marked, and is easily kept in confinement, and it is therefore always in request for ornamental pieces of water. It is common as a winter visitor, on the rivers of Herefordshire, and specimens are killed here annually by the early winter sportsmen.

[Querquedula carolinensis—American Green-winged Teal.]
Once in Devon, and once in Hampshire.

Genus—SPATULA.

SPATULA CLYPEATA—Shoveller.

The Sho'ler, who so shakes the air with sailing wings,
That even as he flies, you still would think he sings.
Drayton—*Polyolbion.*

The Broad-billed Duck is rather an inland than a sea-bird, frequenting stagnant pools, ditches and small lakes. Its food consists of small fishes, worms, leeches, aquatic insects, fish and frog spawn, tadpoles, ground-worms, fresh-water snails, the tender shoots of aquatic plants, grasses, buds and seeds of rushes, and sometimes grain. Fresh-water shrimps, too, are sometimes found in its stomach.

Where the Duck dabbles 'mid rustling sedge.
—*An Evening with Wordsworth.*

The Shoveller takes its name from the broad expansion of its beak, which is abundantly supplied with nerves, and highly sensitive, enabling it the more readily to detect nutritive food. It is excellent eating; "its flesh being tender and superior in flavour," says Audubon himself, "to the celebrated Canvas-back Duck of America."

The Shoveller is very rarely met with in Herefordshire. Mr. Lingwood says in his notes, "killed at the Mynde, 1858;" and a specimen was also shot in the neighbourhood of Leominster a few years since.

GENUS—FULIGULA.

[FULIGULA RUFINA—Red-crested Pochard.]

A rare winter visitor.

FULIGULA CRISTATA—TUFTED DUCK.

This Duck is a regular winter visitor to our coasts, estuaries, and fresh-water rivers, lakes, and ponds. It is rarely kept in confinement, but is very ornamental. It is a round, plump bird, swims low in the water and dives so well, that it is difficult to catch it in the decoys. It obtains its food chiefly by diving, and this consists of aquatic insects, roots, buds and seeds of plants, shell-fish, small frogs and their spawn. The flesh is very good eating, and this Duck is sometimes called Black Wigeon for this reason.

The Tufted Duck is not an infrequent visitor to Herefordshire in the winter months. The specimen in the Museum was formerly in the collection of Mr. Moss, of Ross, and is the one noted by Mr. Lingwood as a Herefordshire example. Two were obtained in the county during the winter 1879-80—one from the river Lugg, near Moreton, and the other from the Wye, at Whitney. Mr. T. L. Mayos, of Llangattock, has also shot one on a pond near his house.

FULIGULA MARILA—Scaup.

The Wild Duck there,
Gluts on the fat'ning ooze, or steals the spawn
Of teeming shoals, her more delicious feast.
Somerville—*Field Sports.*

The Scaup Duck is a regular visitor to the estuaries, and low, flat, muddy shores of the sea-coast, and is very abundant in the north. It comes late in October, and rarely visits inland waters. It is a fat, showy Duck, very wary, and difficult to approach, and except as a specimen of Natural History is of very little use when it is obtained. Its flesh is not good, being coarse, dark-coloured, and fishy. The only recorded occurrence of the Scaup, in Herefordshire, is in Mr. Lingwood's notes, where it is said, "seen in the flesh at Baker's, the bird-stuffer, Hereford, in 1851."

FULIGULA FERINA—Pochard.

This Duck is also called Dun-bird, Red-headed Poker, or Red-eyed Poker, from the reddish-chestnut colour of its head and neck. It is a regular winter visitor from the beginning of October, and leaves in spring for higher northern regions. It does not confine itself to the shores and bays of the coast, but visits also the fresh-water rivers and lakes of the interior, and is often caught in considerable numbers in the decoys. It is much more at home on the water—where it swims and dives most easily—than it is on land, where its gait is difficult and clumsy. Its food, according to Meyer, is obtained chiefly by diving; and consists of the roots, seeds, blossoms, stalks, and young shoots of water-plants, such as *Zostera marina*, glasswrack, or *Ruppia maritima*, sea-grass; with small frogs, aquatic insects, and spawn of sea-fish, with crustacea and mollusca. When feeding on vegetables its flesh is excellent, and ranks equally high for the table with the Shoveller, and the celebrated Canvas-back Duck.

The Pochard is not common in Herefordshire; it only appears on the rivers and large ponds during the severe weather of winter, and does not stay long. It has been killed occasionally in severe weather.

[Genus—Nyroca.]

[Nyroca ferruginea—White-eyed Duck.]

A spring straggler to the East of England.

Genus—CLANGULA.

CLANGULA GLAUCION—Golden-eye.

The clanging Golden-eye.
Crabbe—*Peter Grimes.*

This Drake, Golden-eye, is one of the most handsome and conspicuous birds on ornamental waters, where it is easily kept and becomes very tame. Small flocks arrive every winter at the estuaries and mouths of rivers on the coast. It is a shy, wary bird, and where five or six are feeding together, they never all dive at the same time, so that one is always on guard. It is an expert swimmer and diver. It lives chiefly on small fish, eels, snails, and aquatic insects; its flesh is not good in flavour. In Norway and Lapland, where the Golden-eye breeds, it always chooses a hole in a tree as its resting-place, and often at a considerable height above the ground.

The Golden-eye is a very rare visitor to the rivers in Herefordshire. The specimen in the Hereford Museum was shot on the Wye, near Fawley, in 1837; and another was shot at Weobley, in 1882, and brought to Mr. Newman, the bird-stuffer, in Hereford.

Mr. W. C. Blake of Ross has a specimen of the Golden-eye which was killed on the Wye in the winter of 1879. It is a female bird. Another specimen has since been offered to Mr. Blake, which was picked up dead near Ross, but it was too much decomposed to preserve.

[CLANGULA ISLANDICA—Barrow's Golden-eye.]
Once in the winter of 1863-4.

[CLANGULA ALBEOLA—Buffel-headed Duck.]
Very rare, only seen four or five times.

[Genus—COSMONETTA.]
[COSMONETTA HISTRIONICA—Harlequin Duck.]
Twice in Scotland. A very rare straggler.

[Genus—HARELDA.]
[HARELDA GLACIALIS—Long-tailed Duck.]
Breeds in the Shetland Isles.

[Genus—HENICONETTA.]
[HENICONETTA STELLERI—Steller's Duck.]
Seen twice on the East Coast of England.

[Genus—SOMATERIA.]
[SOMATERIA MOLLISSIMA—Eider Duck.]
Occurs sparingly. Breeds in Fern Islands.

[SOMATERIA SPECTABILIS—King Eider.]
A rare straggler to Britain.

GENUS—ŒDEMIA.

ŒDEMIA NIGRA—COMMON SCOTER.

This handsome black Duck—for the male Scoter is all over of an uniform, velvety, black colour—is an ordinary winter visitor to our sea-coasts. It is often to be seen there in large flocks, and

some few remain during the summer months. It is very rarely met with inland, although in hard weather it sometimes pays a passing visit to the upper reaches of the Wye, in Herefordshire.

The Scoter is a very expert diver, and is able to remain a long time under water. In this way it gets its food, which consists almost exclusively of shell fish, such as mussels and other marine animals and insects. It visits the banks where shell-fish, even at low tide, are still two or three feet under water. There the birds are sometimes caught in considerable numbers, by nets simply spread on the water horizontally, in which they are entangled as they come up. The nature of their food causes their flesh to have such a very strong, oily, fishy taste, that in Roman Catholic countries it is said to be considered identical with fish, and to be thus allowed to be eaten during Lent, and on fast days. This privilege causes much destruction of the birds; and many devices are resorted to for their capture at those times.

[ŒDEMIA FUSCA—Velvet Scoter.]
Not very uncommon. Breeds in Scotland.

[ŒDEMIA PERSPICILLATA—Surf-Scoter.]
A very rare winter visitor.

GENUS—MERGUS.

MERGUS MERGANSER—GOOSANDER.

The Goosander is a winter visitor, coming in November and leaving in March. The flocks, which are not large, generally consist of families, or young birds of the year; the male bird, which is very handsome and striking in appearance, being extremely rare. The Goosander frequents fresh-water rivers and lakes, as well as the sea-shore and its estuaries. It is, however, rarely seen in Herefordshire, except in hard winters. The Rev. Clement Ley saw both

the male and female on the Wye, near Sellack, in the winter 1854-5. Mr. Lingwood also mentions a Goosander in his notes, as having been seen by Mr. Baker, the bird-stuffer, in Hereford, in 1855, possibly a member of the same flock.

Mr. W. C. Blake, of Ross, had a female specimen of the Goosander brought to him, which was found floating down the Wye, with large blocks of ice, during the hard frost of January, 1880. It had not long been dead, for it was quite fresh; but whether it died from want of proper food, or from mishap, cannot be traced; there was no shot-mark on it. He had it preserved, and it is now in his possession. Mr. Blake also had a male specimen of the Goosander brought to him, picked up dead near the Wye; but that was too far gone to preserve.

[MERGUS SERRATOR—Red-breasted Merganser.]

Breeds in Scotland and North Ireland, and occurs from autumn to spring in all parts of the United Kingdom.

[MERGUS CUCULLATUS—Hooded Merganser.]

A very rare straggler.

[MERGUS ALBELLUS—Smew.]

An irregular winter visitor.

ORDER—COLUMBÆ.

FAMILY—COLUMBIDÆ.

GENUS—COLUMBA.

COLUMBA PALUMBUS—RING-DOVE.

Dear is my little native vale,
The Ring-Dove builds and murmurs there.
Close to my cot she tells her tale,
To every passing villager.
ROGERS.

Thro' lofty groves the Cushat roves,
The path of man to shun it.
BURNS.

The Ring-Dove, Cushat-Dove, or Wood-Pigeon, is very frequent in Herefordshire, where it is universally called a "Quist." The name Ring-Dove is a little misleading and ambiguous. It only appears in books; and in them, its use is by no means clear or consistent.

The Ring-Dove of every-day life, means the gentle pet of so many households, the Barbary Dove, a light fawn-coloured bird with a black ring round its neck; whereas the Ring-Dove of ornithology, is the Quist, or Wood-Pigeon, with a band of white feathers on the side of the neck. Its numbers in this county have considerably increased of late years, partly from the destruction of its natural enemies, the Hawks, by the gamekeepers; but chiefly, perhaps, from the greater abundance of food produced for it, by the growth of turnips and the other green crops it greatly affects.

There is the same difference of habits among Quists, as there is among Starlings. Many are resident throughout the year, and become comparatively tame. They build in gardens, and often in the same trees year after year. They feed without fear or shyness, and drink out of ponds, or even bowls, close to houses. Others, on the contrary, are wild and migratory; they come over in large flocks in autumn and winter, either from foreign countries, or from the northern parts of our own island. They cross the North Sea from the Continent by an east and west flight, until in some districts they become so numerous, and do so much damage to the crops, that it becomes a great object to destroy them. This, however, is not a very easy matter, for the Wood-Pigeon is a very wary, watchful bird, and when feeding in flocks in the turnip-fields, is extremely difficult to approach. On the very first appearance of danger, their watchman gives the signal, and they are off instantaneously in a body. The only way to succeed well, is to lie in wait for them in the dusk of the evening, beneath the trees on which they come to roost in large flocks, during the autumn and winter. On a rough, windy evening many may be shot in this way; and they are

worth the trouble, for at this time they are very good eating, and the farmer may thus slightly repay himself for the damage they do.

The sudden flight of a single Wood-Pigeon from a tree is very startling, and the noise of a whole flock is really very great.

> Their rising all at once was like the sound
> Of thunder heard remote.

There is a marked distinction in the nesting habits of the three British species of true Pigeons: the Wood-Pigeon builds on the horizontal branches of trees, often at some distance from the trunk; the Stock-Dove builds in the hollow trunks of trees; and the Rock-Dove in rocks. The nest of the Wood-Pigeon is a mere platform of twigs and sticks, and the pure white eggs may often be seen through it. Shy as the bird generally is, it frequently builds in the pleasure-grounds attached to houses, where the nest can scarcely fail to be discovered.

> Parta meæ Veneri sunt munera: namque notavi
> Ipse locum aëriæ quo congressere palumbes.
> VIRGIL—*Ecl.*, 3, 68-9.

which is thus imitated by Shenstone, who adds an odd little sentimental touch very characteristic of him—

> I have sought out a gift for my fair;
> I have found where the Wood-Pigeons breed;
> But—let me the plunder forbear;
> She'll say 'tis a barbarous deed.

The food of the Wood-Pigeon consists of farm produce, green crops, such as clover, rape, cabbage, and turnip-tops. They will also take the turnips and hollow them out, whenever a rabbit, a hare, a Partridge, or a Rook, has made a hole in the tough outer skin. They eat wheat and barley in great quantities, and peas, beans, and tares. They feed three times a day, and have capacious crops, so that when they are very numerous, they do a considerable amount of damage. On the other hand, they are very fond of the ends of such weeds as charlock, dock, corn-spurrey, &c., which they consume in great quantities; and they are also very fond of beech-mast, and when pressed for food will eat acorns, hips, haws, and the berries of ivy or holly. The quantity of corn sometimes

found in the crop of a single Pigeon is surprising; upwards of a thousand grains of corn have been counted in one instance; in another, one hundred and forty-four field-peas, with seven large beans, were found, and the books notice other contents of extraordinary size.

The note of the Ring-Dove, or Wood-Pigeon, may be closely imitated by the words "Coo-roo-co-o—co-o," spoken through the hands closed and hollow. Others interpret it as "hoo-hoo-coo-coo-hoo." It is said, however, to have been more clearly understood by the Welshman, who on a cattle-stealing expedition was about to take one beast, when he heard the bird tell him distinctly, "Take-two-cows-taf-fy," and tradition says he did so forthwith. The note is somewhat monotonous, but always soft and pleasing. It has not failed to be noticed by many of our poets—

In answer coo'd the Cushat-Dove
Her notes of peace, and rest, and love.
SCOTT.

The Ring-Dove's deep melodious moan.
HEMANS.

The deep mellow crush of the Wood-Pigeon's note
Made music that sweetened the calm.
CAMPBELL.

It has been more generally considered to be plaintive, or even melancholy:

Deep-toned
The Cushat plains; nor is his changeless plaint
Unmusical, when, with the general quire
Of woodland harmony, it softly blends.
GRAHAME.

It is said, indeed, to get its common name of "Quist," or "Queest," from the Latin word *questus*, a complaint, or lamentation.

Over his own sweet voice the Stock-Dove broods,

says Wordsworth, giving the wrong name to the Ring-Dove, or Wood-Pigeon, as he does also again in these lines:—

I heard the Stock-dove sing or say
His homely tale, this very day,
His voice was buried among trees,
Yet to be come at by the breeze;
It did not cease, but coo'd—and coo'd;

And somewhat pensively he woo'd :
He sang of love with quiet blending,
Slow to begin, and never ending ;
Of serious faith and inward glee ;
That was the song—the song for me !
—*Poems of Imagination.*

The song of the Wood Pigeon is heard throughout the spring and summer months, and in early autumn if the weather remains warm and bright, the pleasant sound may still be enjoyed.*

A common rhythmical satire in Herefordshire is rather severe.

Coo ! Coo ! Coo ! Coo !
Too much a-do
To maintain two.
Coo ! Coo ! Coo ! Coo !
The little Wren
Can feed her ten,
And bring them up
Like gentlemen.

When they form into flocks during autumn and winter, their voices are never heard. The Wood-Pigeons then become the most wary of birds, ever on the alert for danger, wild and unapproachable ; and so they remain, until again, as spring sets in, they separate in pairs to breed, find their love notes, and in their unselfish devotion to each other, become more tame, and more confident in the protection of mankind.

The wild Wood-Pigeon, rock'd on high
Has coo'd his last soft note of love,
And fondly nestles by his Dove,
To guard their downy young from an inclement sky.

COLUMBA ŒNAS—STOCK-DOVE.

Thou Stock-Dove, whose echo resounds thro' the glen,
Ye wild whistling Blackbirds in yon thorny den ;
Thou green-crested Lapwing, thy screaming forbear—
I charge you disturb not my slumbering fair.
BURNS.

The Stock-Dove, takes its name from the fact of its nesting in the boles or stocks of trees, such as pollard elms, oaks, willows, or

*It may be that in the autumn we only hear the songs of the birds that reside here, while the migrants are silent.

beech trees. In open districts, however, they will sometimes build in deserted rabbit-burrows, about a yard from the entrance, or on the ground beneath thick furze-bushes, entering by a rabbit-run beneath them.

The Stock-Dove is not driven to these last resources in Herefordshire, where hollow stocks in the trees are vastly more numerous than these Doves to build in them. It is not a common bird in this county, but is found occasionally in secluded districts, frequenting the same tree year after year. Their morning and evening note is a prolonged "coo-oo-oo." The Stock-Dove resembles the Wood-Pigeon in its habits, and in the food it takes, and is occasionally brought to the poulterer's for sale with it.

COLUMBA LIVIA—Rock-Dove.

O my Dove, that art in the clefts of the rock.
—*Cant. II.*, 14.

And yet more splendid, numerous flocks
Of Pigeons, settling on the rocks,
With their rich restless wings, that gleam
Variously in the crimson beam
Of the warm west.
Moore—*Lalla Rookh.*

The Rock-Dove is supposed to be the origin of all the many domestic varieties of the Pigeon. It agrees with them in habits, attitudes, mode of flight, manner of feeding, and especially in the characteristic habit of perching or nesting in rocks, or in masonry, to the avoidance of trees.

His Pigeons, who in session on their roofs
Approved him, bowing at their own deserts.
Tennyson—*The Brook.*

All other species of Wild Pigeons in the old world, on the contrary, frequent trees by preference. The white feathers on the croup, or rump, of the Rock-Dove with its black-barred wings, constitute its distinctive coloration; and these feathers are often to be seen among the flocks from the dovecot, showing a return to their origin.

Darwin, in his work on "The Variation of Plants and Animals under Domestication," has so fully treated of Pigeons and their varieties, that it is the text-book on the subject to which all must resort who are specially interested in this subject. He makes one curious observation with reference to the coloration of Pigeons, which must be noticed. He says, "there seems to be some relation between the croup being blue or white, and the temperature of the country inhabited by both wild and dovecot Pigeons; for nearly all the dovecot Pigeons in the northern parts of Europe have a white croup like that of the wild European Rock-Pigeon; and nearly all the dovecot Pigeons of India have a blue croup like that of the wild *Columba intermedia* of India."

The Rock-Dove is a resident British species, and its favourite haunts are in the deep caverns and dark recesses of the rocks on the sea-coast. It is comparatively rare inland, a fact due, most probably, to the scarcity of the localities suited to it. In Herefordshire, it breeds at the Stanner Rocks, near Kington ("Transactions of the Woolhope Club," 1869), and also at the Cwm-y-oy Rocks, at the Black Mountains, on the borders of the county. The Stock-Dove, or the dovecot Pigeons which will sometimes take up their residence in rocks, are liable to be mistaken for this species.

The Rock-Dove, with its tame descendants, and indeed all the Pigeon tribe, pair for life, lay two eggs, and sit for three weeks, the male and female birds relieving each other on the nest. Hence has arisen the old Scottish saying, "A doo's cleckin" for a family of only two children, a boy and a girl;—or "a pigeon pair," as they are called in some districts of England.

The principal food of the Rock-Dove is grain, seeds of weeds, wild mustard, or charlock seeds, roots of coarse grass, and green leaves. It also takes the small snails within the shells, *Helix ericetorum*, and *Bulimus acutus*, which abound in the sandy pastures near the sea.

Qualis speluncâ subito commota Columba,
Cui domus, et dulces latebroso in pumice nidi,
Fertur in arva volans, plausumque exterrita pennis,
Dat tecto ingentem mox aëre lapsa quieto,
Radit iter liquidum, celeres neque commovet alas.
VIRGIL—*Æneid 5, 213—217.*

As when the Dove her rocky hold forsakes,
Rous'd in a fright, her sounding wings she shakes,
The cavern rings with clatt'ring; out she flies,
And leaves her callow care, and cleaves the skies;
At first she flutters; but at length she springs
To smoother flight, and shoots upon her wings.
DRYDEN.

GENUS—TURTUR.

TURTUR COMMUNIS—TURTLE DOVE.

We'll teach him to know Turtles from Jays.
SHAKESPEARE—*Merry Wives of Windsor III.*, 3.

The green hill-side
The haunt of cooing Turtle.
MACKAY.

The Turtle Dove has ever held a foremost place among the pleasant sounds and sights of spring. It is migratory in Palestine, as well as here, and is thus introduced in the bright picture of spring, in the Song of Songs.

"Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the Turtle is heard in our land."—*Cant. II.*, 11 & 12.

This pretty little Dove, the smallest of its tribe, is supposed to get its Latin name from its note, which is fairly represented by the word "tur-r-r, tu-r-r." It is a soft, simple, monotonous murmur, rather than a "coo." Poets, ancient and modern, call it "a moan," but it is a plaintive, trembling note, soft and soothing, rather than sad, or melancholy.

Nec gemere aëria cessabit Turtur ab ulmo.
VIRGIL—*Eclog I.*, 58.

Nor shall, from lofty elm, the Turtle cease to moan.
—*Trans.*

The Turtle's moan is heard in every grove.
PHILIPS.

The moan of Doves in immemorial elms.
TENNYSON—*The Princess.*

Deep mourns the Turtle in sequestered bower.
BEATTIE—*Minstrel.*

The Turtle Dove is common throughout the villages, hedge-rows, and small coppices of Herefordshire, but is more frequently heard than seen, being shy in its habits, and inconspicuous in its plumage. Consequently it is much less known than most birds that are equally common; and even when seen, it is frequently not recognised. It is a spring visitant from Africa, as welcome as the Cuckoo, though far less demonstrative; and it is one of the birds whose numbers seem to be increasing year by year. It is the least mischievous of all the Pigeon tribe. Its food consists chiefly of seeds of various weeds, green leaves, such as of clover and vetches, and grain when it becomes ripe. It has been accused of eating the soft, milky grain from the ears of green wheat, but this has never been proved. Mr. Johns mentions an instance, indeed, in which two Turtle Doves were shot when rising from a green wheat-field, but their crops were found to be distended with the green seed-vessels of the corn-spurrey *(Spergula arvensis)*, so common in corn-fields, and "the heart of the slaughterer was smitten." In point of fact, the Turtle Dove may be considered rather more of a friend than an enemy to agriculture.

The Turtle Dove has ever been regarded as the emblem of peace, of love, and of constancy. Among Christians it has received a far higher meaning, as an emblem of the Holy Spirit: and the Dove bearing an olive-branch in its mouth, which brought to Noah the welcome intelligence that the Flood was abating, has been accepted as the symbol of peace and reconciliation.

Art thou the bird that saw the waters cease?
—Yes, and brought home the olive-branch of peace,
Thenceforth I haunt the woods of thickest green,
Pleased to be often heard and seldom seen.
MONTGOMERY—*Birds.*

In heathen times, the Dove was regarded as sacred to Venus; and as such it was engraved on gems, or rings, and on seals, for gifts of affection. Poetical references to the Dove abound in all tongues and languages. Shakespeare constantly alludes to it.

By the simplicity of Venus' Doves.
SHAKESPEARE—*Mid. N. Dream I.*, 1.

So Turtles pair,
That never mean to part.
—*Winter's Tale IV.*, 3.

Like to a pair of loving Turtle Doves,
That could not live asunder day or night.
1st King Henry VI,, 2, 2.

As true as steel, as plantage to the moon,
As sun to day, as Turtle to her mate.
—*Troilus and Cressida III*,, 2.

By nature soft I know a Dove,
Can never live without her love.
PRIOR—*Turtle and Sparrow.*

Loved at first like Dove and Dove.
TENNYSON.

And numerous other poetical illustrations to the same effect might be given.

[Genus—ECTOPISTES.]

[ECTOPISTES MIGRATORIUS—Passenger Pigeon.]

A very rare straggler.

[ORDER—PTEROCLETES.]

[FAMILY—PTEROCLIDÆ.]

[GENUS—SYRRHAPTES.]

[SYRRHAPTES PARADOXUS—Pallas's Sand-Grouse.]

Has occasionally occurred in large numbers, particularly in 1863.

ORDER—GALLINÆ.

FAMILY—PHASIANIDÆ.

GENUS—PHASIANUS.

PHASIANUS COLCHICUS—PHEASANT.

Advocate's the court-word for a Pheasant.
SHAKESPEARE—*Winter's Tale IV.*, 3.

The gaudy Pheasant, rich with varying dyes,
That fade alternate, and alternate glow,
Receiving now his colours from the skies,
And now reflecting back the watery bow.
ANON.

> Pheasant, forsake the country, come to town;
> I'll warrant thee a place beneath the crown.
> —No, not to roost upon the throne, would I
> Renounce the woods, the mountains, and the sky.
>
> MONTGOMERY—*Birds.*

The Pheasant was introduced into England many centuries ago, and by the care of the landowners, and the protection of the Game Laws, has become thoroughly naturalized in the British Isles. The history and the early notices of the Pheasant, as given by Tegetmeier, Yarrell, and other writers, may be thus briefly stated.

The common Pheasant is a native of the wet, marshy forests on the shores of the Caspian Sea, the river valleys of the Caucasus, the neighbourhood of Astrachan, and the northern portions of Asia Minor, and it is still to be found there in abundance. Mythological tradition attributes its first discovery to Jason and the Argonauts (B.C. 1200). He found it on the banks of the river Phasis, in Colchis, and hence it has got its generic and specific names. This classic stream is the modern Rion which flows into the Black Sea, near the town of Poti, whence the railway now runs to Tiflis. From hence the Pheasant has been introduced, at this or at some other unknown period, to nearly every country in Europe. It is believed to have been known to the Athenians at a very early period. The Romans received it from the Greeks, and they are thought to have introduced it into Britain, as it is known that they did the Fallow Deer.

The most ancient record of its occurrence in Great Britain is contained in one of the early manuscripts at the British Museum, published by Bishop Stubbs in 1861. The date of the manuscript is *circa* 1177, and it contains the bill of fare drawn up by Harold for each monk in the Canon's household at Waltham, from the feast of St. Michael to Ash Wednesday, A.D. 1059. Besides Geese and Fowls, it mentions twelve Blackbirds, two Magpies, two Partridges, and "*unus Phasianus*": thus showing that the Pheasant had become naturalized in England before the Norman invasion.

It appears from Dugdale's "Monasticon Anglicanum" that at the commencement of the reign of Henry I., A.D. 1100, license was given to the Abbot of Amesbury to kill hares and Pheasants. It is also stated by the critic on Mr. Tegetmeier's work on "Pheasants" in the *Saturday Review*, that Thomas-à-Becket, on the day of his martyrdom (Dec. 29th, 1179), dined on a Pheasant, and from the remark of one of his monks, "he dined more heartily and cheerfully that day than usual."

The Pheasant, however, was but little known in Germany, France, and England until the time of the Crusades, when the striking custom was introduced of serving up the Pheasant at table, with its head unplucked and the tail feathers attached, as a dish fit for kings and emperors, an honour that previously had been confined to the Peacock.

Daniell in his "Rural Sports" mentions that in the reign of Edward I., A.D. 1299, according to Echard's History of England, the price of a Pheasant was fourpence, a couple of Woodcocks three halfpence, a Mallard three halfpence, and a Plover one penny, which shows that by that time the Pheasant was well-known and tolerably plentiful.*

Richard II.'s cook wrote a sort of cookery book *(circa* 1381), which contains a receipt "for to boile Fesant, Ptruch, Capons, and Curlew." The Pheasant is also mentioned in an old Ballad of "The Battle of Otterbourne" *(c.* 1388).

> The Fawkon and the Fesaunt both,
> Amonge the holtes on 'hee.'

At the enthronization of George Nevill, Archbishop of York, in the reign of Edward IV., amongst other goodly provision made for the occasion, according to Leland, were—"Fessauntes 200; Partridges 500; Heronshaws 400; Woodcocks 400; Quailes 100 dozen; Plovers 400; of the fowles called Rees 200 dozen, Peacockes 104, Mallards and Teals 4,000, Cranes 204, Swannes

*The prices, however, can hardly be estimated, as the value of money has decreased enormously.

400, Geese 2,000, Bitters 204, Curlews 100, Egrittes 1,000, Pigeons 4,000, Capons 1,000, with large quantity of other meats."

In the Household Book of L'Estranges of Hunstanton (1519 to 1578) there are such entries in the reign of Henry VIII. as "VJ fesands and IJ Ptrychys kyllyed wt the Hauks." "Item, to Mr. Ashley's servant for brynging a Fesant Cocke and four Woodcocks on the 18th day of October, in reward, four-pence." "Item, a Fesant kylled with a Goshawke."

Similar allusions are made in the Household Book of Henry Percy, the fifth Earl of Northumberland (1512), and the list of the prices of the following birds, amongst others, are given: "Chickeyns at ½d a pece, Hennys at iid a pece, Geysse iiid or iiiid at the moste, Plovers id or i½d at moste, Crayns xvid a pece, Hearonshays xiid a pece, Mallardes iid a pece, Teylles id a pece, Woodcokes id or i½d at the moste, Wypes (*i.e.*, Lapwings) id a pece, Quaylles iid a pece at moste, Pertryges at iid a pece, Bytters (Bitterns) xiid, Fesauntes xiid, Kyrlewes xiid a pece, Pacokes xiid a pece, Dottrells id a pece, &c."

From the time of the Tudor monarchs, Pheasants and Partridges are specified in many statutes for the protection of game, and have, therefore, been well-known.

The Pheasant is very readily tamed, but can never be domesticated. He has an innate shyness and timidity that makes every attempt to do so a failure. He will feed regularly with the common poultry, and eat from the hand, but on any sudden alarm, off he flies at a moment's notice to the nearest covert. The common Cock struts and crows, proud of himself, and vainly conscious of the admiration he excites, but

> Not so the Pheasant on his charms presumes,
> Though he too has a glory in his plumes.
> He, christianlike, retreats with modest mien
> To the close copse, or far-sequester'd green,
> And shines without desiring to be seen.
>
> COWPER—*Truth*, 66.

The Rev. Thos. Woodhouse mentions the following curious anecdote of a Pheasant. A friend of his was walking through the

fields, at Alresford, when he saw a fine cock Pheasant run hurriedly across the path. In an instant the bird dropped, and lay perfectly still, and on looking more closely, he saw that the bird was lying quite flat, pretending to be dead; in order, no doubt, to escape observation. He had heard of such a thing before, but had never witnessed it.

The Pheasant is polygamous. He leaves the whole duty of incubation and of rearing the young birds to the hen. The nest is little more than a few leaves, in a hole scratched in the ground, beneath tall grass. It is very often placed close by a public path, or highway road, where the bird and her eggs would be in constant danger, but for the curious fact that during incubation the bird does not give off any appreciable scent. Dogs accustomed to hunt game will pass close by a Pheasant on her nest, without detecting her presence. Mr. Tegetmeier considers this to be due to vicarious secretion. The scent is not given off from the body as usual, but is passed with the secretions, when the bird has left her nest, and thus her safety is ensured.

The Pheasant, like the domestic fowl, is terrestrial in habit. He is very omnivorous, and at certain seasons of the year must be considered as somewhat injurious to agriculture. In this respect, however, when they are not too numerous, the great beauty of the bird, the excellent sport he affords, and his high appreciation on the table are sufficient to condone his faults.

> Preach as I please, I doubt our curious men
> Will choose a Pheasant still before a hen.
>
> POPE.

> 'Tis not the meat, but 'tis the appetite
> Makes eating a delight,
> And if I like one dish
> More than another, that a Pheasant is.
>
> SUCKLING—*Sonnet.*

In a wild state the food of the Pheasant consists of every seed the farmer sows; beans, peas, wheat, barley, or oats; the fresh green leaves of young corn, sprouting beans and peas, clover, rape and turnips. In the severe weather of winter he picks holes through the tough skin of the turnip bulbs, and

leaves the Wood-Pigeons to hollow them out. On the other hand, he is very fond of grubs, wire-worms, and insects of all kinds, particularly ants and their eggs, and the spangles and galls upon oak-leaves. Mr. Waterton found that his Pheasants destroyed all the grasshoppers in his park; and Mr. Tegetmeier states that upwards of 1,200 wire-worms have been taken out of the crop of a single hen Pheasant. They eat an immense number of ripe seeds of weeds, such as corn-spurrey, cow-wheat, *polygonum* grasses, sedges, hemp-nettles, &c. They are fond of beech-nuts, sweet chestnuts, acorns, and berries of all kinds; blackberries, mistletoe-berries, elder-berries, and gooseberries, and currants when they have a chance of getting them. They will pick hips, haws, and sloes from the hedges, and attack apples and pears in the orchards. In the spring they will eat the bulbous roots of the buttercup, *Ranunculus bulbosus*, the celandine *Ficaria verna*, and the roots of silverweed, *Potentilla anserina*. Like fowls, also, they are sometimes carnivorous, and will eat frogs, slow-worms and field-mice; and with all their food, at all seasons, they take numerous small fragments of stones and gravel.

To keep Pheasants from straying in autumn, few methods are more effective, it is said, than to sow some neighbouring patch of ground with a mixture of beans, peas, and buckwheat, and leave the crop on the ground—a plan that gives them food and shelter at the same time. An adjoining patch of fern makes them still more at home, awaiting the sportsman.

> And from the brake
> Rush forth the whirring Pheasant high in air;
> He waves his varied plumes, stretching away
> With hasty wing.
>
> SOMERVILLE—*Field Sports.*

The hen Pheasant in old age is apt to assume more or less of the plumage of the cock bird, and some curious specimens have been killed in this county, and may be seen in private collections.

Herefordshire is admirably suited to the habits of the Pheasant. Its wooded hills and dales, and its numerous springs and streams, amply supply the essential requisites for the bird. Numerous

plantations exist throughout the county, and there is an abundant supply of the good ground-shelter he delights in : such as long grass kept up by brambles and bushes, or moist ground, overgrown with rushes, reeds, and osiers. Large quantities of Pheasants are annually produced, and sent up to the London markets from Herefordshire, and the amount might still be greater.

With all these advantages, however, it is found here, as elsewhere, that the Pheasant requires the continued care of the landed proprietors, and the protection of the Game Laws, to save it from extinction. In our severe winters the natural supply of food becomes so limited, that without artificial feeding, the birds would get so weak, as to become an easy prey to the small rapacious creatures, from which they are otherwise able to protect themselves. Pheasants command a high price in the market, and thus offer a great temptation to poachers. They are very easily shot, and taken in many ways ; without careful preservation, and the protection of penal statutes, they would quickly dwindle away with us, as they have done, so remarkably of late years, in France. Already in the extensive woods in Herefordshire, which are no longer preserved, such as Haugh Wood, Badnage, and the woods belonging to Guy's Hospital, for example, wild Pheasants are extremely scarce, and when found, they are but temporary wanderers from some neighbouring estate, where their presence is protected.

The propensity of the Pheasant to roost in larch trees, or in the apple trees of an orchard, instead of in the Scotch or spruce firs provided for them, sadly exposes these birds to destruction from the gun of the poacher, who is thus enabled to see them with the faintest glimmer of light.

The preservation of game in a country district, is an object of much higher importance to the public than it would seem to be at first sight. It is the amusement afforded by game, that brings the Squire's friends around him ; it is the game, which keeps mansions occupied in remote districts of the country during the dreary months of winter ; it is the game, which brings rich strangers

into the country, and gives to the district the advantages of resident wealth. The game is never forgotten, in advertisements to let or sell country property; indeed, no residential estate would be complete without game. Now, the game chiefly meant in all these instances is the Pheasant. No other game bird is so readily procured, so easily retained, or so safely to be relied upon. The Pheasant, moreover, is the most ornamental of all game birds. A fine old cock Pheasant jumping on the bar to open by his own weight the patent feeding-box, and help himself to the maize within, is a very beautiful object in the pleasure-grounds, especially when the glancing rays of a summer evening's sun show off his brilliant plumage. He is so completely at home, that he seems "to the *manor* born," and he doubtless regards the feeding-box as the natural production of the soil for his especial delectation—

> The bold cock Pheasant stalk'd along the road,
> Whose gold and purple tints alternate glow'd.
>
> BLOOMFIELD—*Spring.*

The great advantages, as well as the great necessity in these days for game on estates, have thus given rise to the artificial breeding and rearing of Pheasants, which of late years have been carried out to so great an extent. Pheasant's eggs are now readily attainable, and are imported in great numbers, either to stock an estate, or to increase the number of birds, so as to provide the fashionable modern amusement of battue shooting. Pheasant shooting is a costly pleasure for the rich, but is not unproductive of general advantage. The wholesale slaughter of reared Pheasants which annually takes place, may be ridiculed, or decried as a sport; but it produces, nevertheless, a large supply of a delicious article of food, which could not otherwise be procured, by the public in general, at so reasonable a rate. It is therefore but false sentimentalism to say with Pope:

> See! from the brake the whirring Pheasant springs,
> And mounts exulting on triumphant wings:
> Short is his joy; he feels the fiery wound,
> Flutters in blood, and panting beats the ground.
> Ah! what avail his glossy, varying dyes,
> His purple crest, and scarlet-circled eyes,
> The vivid green his shining plumes unfold,
> His painted wings, and breast that flames with gold?

They avail him much in procuring for him an ample supply of food and protection; and since die he must for food, death by gunshot wound is perhaps less painful than by any other mode.

The Pheasant introduced into Britain so many centuries since, *Phasianus colchicus*, remained pure in breed until the end of the last century, when other hardy varieties of Pheasant began to be introduced, and the crossing of different breeds set in. The first to be introduced was the Collared or Ring-necked Pheasant, of Southern China, *Phasianus torquatus*. It is smaller than the common Pheasant. It has bright plumage, great metallic lustre, with a band or ring of clear white feathers round its neck (it is from this it gets its specific name), buff flanks, and a rich tint of lavender and green on its wing and tail-coverts. Except in these particulars, says Cuvier, it scarcely differs from the Colchican Pheasant. It differs, also, however, in having a more restless, wandering disposition. It is a bold bird, quick in flight, and in spring will fly for miles, Don Juan-like, to visit the Pheasants of all the neighbouring, or even of the distant woods.

The Ring-necked Pheasant was first introduced into English coverts by the Duke of Northumberland, says Montague, in 1802. It proved so hardy and prolific that it soon spread rapidly. Its courage and vigour render it easily tameable. The hens lay much earlier in the season than any other variety of Pheasant, and produce a more abundant supply of eggs; and thus, when egg-selling began to be the trade it has since become, it was much more profitable to the breeders to use this variety. In this way too it has come to pass, from the general distribution of eggs, that the "prime old English breed," as it is sometimes called, with its great size, its dark black and red breast, the large patch of crimson round the eyes, and its deep red rump-feathers, is seldom to be met with untainted by the cross.

Some few years since, Mr. Frank Buckland regularly visited the game-shops in London for two seasons, and examined the large supply of Pheasants they received, without finding a single true specimen of *Phasianus colchicus*. At Mr. Buckland's request,

Mr. J. F. Symonds, of Okeleigh, Hereford, tried, but also in vain, to procure a cock Pheasant of the original Colchican breed from the gamekeepers of Herefordshire. Many of them believed they had the "old birds" in their respective manors, but nevertheless failed to produce one. It is now some years since Mr. Gould expressed the opinion, that in twenty years there would not be a true specimen in the country. There are some few left, however, in remote districts. Mr. H. C. Beddoe shot one at Wormesley Grange, in 1878. There is a specimen in the billiard-room at Garnstone; another fine bird in the hall at Vennwood House; and others here and there throughout the county.

The interesting specimen presented to the Hereford Museum by Mr. E. W. Colt-Williams, was shot by him at Kinnersley, in November, 1886.

Mr. Horne, of Hereford, has now imported from the Phasis, or Rion River, some of the true *colchicus*, such as the bird was, when originally brought to this country, and he hopes to be able to breed the old pure birds. This, he believes, is the first attempt to re-introduce the original Pheasant.

The improvement in the breed of Pheasants has now become a matter of considerable importance to country estates. The beautiful birds that ornament our parks and woods are but naturalized foreigners, and there are several other varieties, of varied and still greater beauty, which might be introduced profitably. They are equally hardy and prolific, and some of them of larger size than those we now possess.

The Japanese Pheasant, *Phasianus versicolor*, is smaller than the *colchicus*, and a beautiful bird, with a bright crimson face, a glossy, changeable bluish-green on the neck, and a brilliant dark-green breast. This bird was introduced into England by Lord Derby, the great zoologist, in 1840, who obtained the variety from the King of Italy. It is an excellent "gun-bird," rising readily from the covert, and is of undeniable excellence on the table. It does not show, moreover, the disposition to wander, which is so

objectionable in the Ring-necked, and some other varieties of Pheasant. It is a late breeder, the hens lay freely, and in confinement each hen will produce forty eggs on the average. The cock will cross readily with the common Pheasant, if hens of his own variety are not present, and the cross is a bird of brilliant plumage, of greater size, and of more tender and well-flavoured flesh on the table than the ordinary Pheasant. The *versicolor* Pheasant is well established in several English coverts, and shot with the more common ones. It has been introduced in the Rotherwas woods by Joseph Harrison, Esq.

Reeves' Pheasant, *Phasianus reevesi*, is another most desirable variety. It was introduced by Mr. Reeves into Europe in 1831, from China, but it is only within the last few years that it has been re-introduced successfully. It is a magnificent bird, much larger than the common Pheasant, and with a tail four or five feet in length and sometimes longer. It is bright in colour. The top of its head is white, surrounded by a black band, and it has a broad band of white round its neck. The feathers of the back and upper part of the breast are golden-yellow, margined by black; the lower breast-feathers are white, with the same margin; the under parts of the body black. It comes from a cold country, and will stand the hardest winter. It breeds freely, and is wild and shy enough to take care of itself. It rises readily with great strength of flight, and makes an excellent "rocketer."

Reeves' Pheasant breeds freely in Lord Tweedmouth's coverts at Guisachan, Inverness, and crosses readily with the ordinary Pheasant when his own hens are absent. The young birds arrive quickly at maturity, and when bred with other Pheasants, their more rapid growth and greater size are quickly apparent.

Fine specimens of the cock and hen Reeves' Pheasant are now in the Hereford Museum.

The call-note of Reeves' Pheasant is of a most unexpected character, more like the simple song of a small bird, delivered in as high a key as the song of the Hedge-Sparrow, *Accentor modularis*

—a musical note of no great power, and not at all such as would be expected from a Pheasant.

Elliot's Pheasant, *Phasianus ellioti*, is another hardy Pheasant from the mountains of Ningpo. It was first introduced into Europe in 1874, but it has only recently reached England. It is a very handsome variety, of moderate size and great beauty. The cock has a red back and breast, with a crescent of black across its centre. Its rump feathers are steel-black, with a central bar of white, and the under parts of its body are white. Its metallic tints are fine, and Mr. Swinhoe thinks it one of the most magnificent of the Pheasants for colour and size. It is a Pheasant that promises exceedingly well, but its character in our coverts has yet to be proved. It lays early in the season, beginning as early as March 15.

The Copper Pheasant of Japan, Sœmmerring's Pheasant *(Phasianus sœmmeringii)*, is another exquisitely beautiful variety. "The most beautiful of all true Pheasants," says Commodore Perry, "and for richness and brilliancy of colour, will vie with almost any other species of bird." "The whole body presents a golden brilliancy not exceeded by any object of nature, for the metallic lustre of its feathers is equal to the most brilliant markings of the Humming Bird," is the report of it given by Dr. Wilson, of the United States' navy. This Pheasant was introduced into England in 1864, and bred in the Zoological Gardens in Regent's Park, in 1865. The cock Sœmmerring's Pheasant is, however, of a most fierce pugnacious disposition, and Bluebeard-like, frequently kills his wives. He is a most difficult bird therefore, to manage in confinement, and has not yet been tried at large, when this ferocity would probably be toned down to practical limits.

There are upwards of twenty other varieties of the true Pheasant, which may be reared and kept in aviaries, or at large, by those who choose to do so; but those already given in addition to our own, viz., the *versicolor*, Reeves', Elliot's, and Sœmmerring's Pheasants, are the finest and most beautiful birds; the best adapted to ornament our parks and woods, and to give

amusement to their owners, and they would, therefore, be the most valuable birds to introduce to our coverts. They are all true Pheasants, and as Mr. Tegetmeier says, "are mere geographical variations of one type, capable of breeding together, and of perpetuating any cross between them that it may please experimenters to produce." So that with such varied beauty as the foundation, it would be quite possible, by judicious selection, for every large estate in the country to obtain its own distinctive cross of birds.

Hereford is fortunate, at this time, in having as a resident, one of the most experienced and successful importers and breeders of this very beautiful tribe of birds. Mr. George Horne has made it his hobby for the last twenty years, to obtain and rear these stranger Pheasants. He has spared neither time nor expense in the work, and the experience he has gained in their management, with all the generosity of a scientific naturalist, he places at the service of any one interested in the subject; and is at all times pleased to show his beautiful birds.

Mr. Horne began by rearing the Golden Pheasant *(Thaumalia picta)* and the Lady Amherst Pheasant *(Thaumalia amhersti)*. He then crossed these varieties, and obtained the very beautiful specimens now exhibited in the Hereford Museum. He has also kept the Impeyan Pheasant, the Siamese Fireback, Swinhoe's Peacock-Pheasant, from the Island of Formosa, which has eyes like the Peacock on each feather, Reeves', *versicolor*, Elliot's and several other varieties.

It is impossible to visit Mr. Horne's aviaries, without hoping that before many years have elapsed, these beautiful varieties may adorn the parks and woods of Shobdon, Stoke Edith, Hampton Court, Holme Lacy, Whitfield, and many others which might be named in Herefordshire, and which are all so well adapted for rearing and protecting Pheasants. It would be a great ornament to see beautiful birds, such as the *reevesi*, with their glorious plumage of golden-bronze, and fully six feet in length, feeding up to the very windows of the mansions. The birds are not difficult

to rear; the best way to obtain them is to pen a few birds, and then substitute their eggs for those of the common hen, under whose care they would grow up, and become familiar with their future home, more certainly than hand-reared birds.

Genus—CACCABIS.

CACCABIS RUFA—Red-legged Partridge.

When milder autumn summer's heat succeeds,
And in the new-shorn field the Partridge feeds.
Pope—*Windsor Forest.*

The Guernsey, or French Partridge, as this handsome bird is often called, is a native of the South of Europe, and generally plentiful on the Continent. It is said to have been first introduced into England by Charles II., who turned out some birds in the neighbourhood of Windsor; and, afterwards, by the Duke of Northumberland, the Marquis of Hertford, Lord Rendlesham (*c.* 1770), and other noblemen. But the most successful introduction was by Lord de Ros and Alvanly at Culford, near Bury St. Edmunds, in 1823. Since that time, the Red-legged Partridge has been plentiful in Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Herts, Essex, Bucks, and Middlesex; and wanders occasionally into other counties. About fifty years ago, the Red-legged Partridge was introduced on the Homend, and Canon-ffrome estates, but they have long since been destroyed, and not a single bird has been seen there for many years.

The Red-legged Partridge prefers open uncultivated districts with bushy heath, or commons, in preference to arable land; but they will frequent cultivated ground, where bushes are plentiful. The birds will run before the dogs like an old cock Pheasant, and will not rise if they can help it. They are not therefore in much favour with sportsmen. They will, too, occasionally perch on trees, or even on a gate, or a rail.

The Red-legged Partridge is as yet a rare bird in Herefordshire, and the instances which have occurred here seem to have been wanderers from Gloucestershire, where they are reported to be on the increase. In 1864, a single bird was shot at Fawley, which is now in the Hereford Museum. In 1874, Mr. Walter Dew, of Netherstone, Brampton Abbots, met with a covey of five, in the Abbots meadow, skirting the river, and killed a brace of them. Some years since, Mr. Frank Wigmore shot a single bird at Bollitree. A single bird was also killed at Eaton Bishop, in 1869, which is now in the Hereford Museum. Mr. Morris, of Aston Ingham, on the borders of Gloucestershire, has met with a few around Longhope, within the last two or three years. On October 13th, 1886, a Red-legged Partridge was brought to Mr. W. C. Blake, of Ross, from the Marcle district.

[Caccabis petrosa—Barbary Partridge.]
A rare straggler to England.

Genus—PERDIX.

PERDIX CINEREA—Partridge.

Ah! nut-brown Partridges!
Ah! brilliant Pheasants!
Byron—*Don Juan.*

The Paitrick whirrin o'er the ley.
Burns—*Bess.*

The Partridge burst away on whirring wings.
Beattie—*Minstrel.*

To sweet repasts the unwary Partridge flies,
With joy amid the scattered harvest lies.
Gay—*Rural Sports.*

The covey in the morning dew
Which sudden rises, and with whirring wing
And chuckling outcry hurries down the vale.
Hurdis—*The Favorite Village.*

These Partridge-breeders of a thousand years.
Tennyson—*Aylmer's Field.*

The Partridge is a thoroughly English bird, and is nowhere to be found so plentifully as in England. A country walk is always enlivened, when "Birds" are seen, as is so frequently the case. If a Partridge is suddenly surprised, it rises close at hand, with a whirr, like a spinning-wheel; but if, as is more usually the case, the intruder is observed in time, the covey will run and rise, with at first, a rapid movement of their wings, until they skim in a sailing fashion over the nearest hedge-row, with the twist, to avoid any object they may see there, which is sometimes so fatal to them.

The round of Partridge life seems to be much as follows. The birds seldom take wing unless disturbed. In the early morning they repair, from the grass-fields where they have passed the night, to the arable-land, clover, corn, or stubble-fields, as the case may be, picking up grubs, insects, and green leaves, as they meet with them. They pass the mid-day in the shelter of the growing crops of corn, clover, or potatoes, and here they get their second supply of food; resorting afterwards to some convenient road, or dry ground, where they can shuffle their feathers and dust themselves. As evening approaches, they leave the corn-fields, and pass along the hedge-rows into the open grass-fields, where they separate themselves insect-hunting, rejoicing particularly in any ants and their eggs that they can find, until as the "droning flight" of the beetle is heard in the air, the call "chicurrr," "chicurrr" is given by the master-bird, to summon the wanderers together. They all meet in the plain open field to "jug" for the night, as it is called, that is, to squat and nestle together. They form a close circle, with their tails in the centre and their heads outwards, so as to perceive and escape from any danger that may arise, as quickly as may be.

The cry of the Partridge is one of the pleasantest of country sounds, beginning early in the year and lasting late; and has thus attracted the notice of Hurdis, who says—

> I love to hear the cry
> Of the night-loving Partridge.

and of Clare, though his imitation of the sound is only another

instance of the difficulty of all attempts to represent such notes by written words.

> With "kirchup"! "kirchup"! 'mong the wheats
> Partridge distant Partridge greets;
> Beckoning hints to those that roam
> That guide the squander'd covey home.

Partridges pair early in February, and make a slender nest on the ground, under the shelter of some growing crops or herbage. They lay from ten to eighteen eggs, upon which only the hen bird sits. As soon, however, as the young birds are hatched, the cock bird joins the family, and few things are more interesting in country-life, than to notice the affectionate anxiety exhibited by both parents in the care of the young birds, and the clever stratagems they will display to protect them from danger. When suddenly surprised, a peculiar cry of distress is given; immediately each little bird hides itself and becomes invisible, whilst the old birds will flutter along the ground, as if lame and unable to fly, or will even drop down as if dead, in order to attract the attention, and entice the intruder away; and whichever bird the intruder follows, the other gives another gentle signal, and leads the little ones off to the nearest shelter, in an opposite direction. The old birds will fight with great boldness, any Crow or Hawk that endeavours to seize their young.

Many Partridges' nests are destroyed in cutting the early crops of rye-grass, clover, or vetches, in which the birds are so fond of hiding, but when possible the eggs are saved and hatched under hens. The young birds so reared are very tame at first, but when once they get their full strength of wing, away they fly; and the terror of the first report of a gun, makes them thoroughly wild. Partridges are restless birds, shy in habit, and when once frightened they take a long rapid flight into a new district, where, if undisturbed, they will very likely remain. For these reasons the artificial rearing of Partridges is only resorted to, when the eggs would otherwise be spoilt.

The Partridge does far more good than harm on the farm; for though they are fond of grain, and will eat the sprouting corn, and in severe weather will injure the turnips, they eat much more continuously the seeds of many troublesome weeds, and devour

immense numbers of grubs, wire-worms, and other noxious insects. Indeed they are seldom numerous enough to do much mischief, and the farmer never complains of a bird which gives so much interesting sport, and is so delicious upon the table.

The Partridge requires but very little help or protection. It will find its own food at all seasons, and is wary enough when the first few days of September are gone by, to avoid ordinary dangers. Its natural enemies are Hawks, cats, polecats, stoats, and weasels; but more to be feared than all these, is the poacher with his net, when the covey is "jugged" for the night, for in one fell swoop they may all be destroyed.

> Secure they trust th' unfaithful field beset,
> 'Till hov'ring o'er them sweeps the swelling net.
>
> POPE—*Windsor Forest.*

> On the close covey, vexed with various woes,
> While sad they sit their anxious mother round,
> With dismal shade the closing net descends.
>
> LEYDEN—*Albania.*

Mr. J. F. Symonds, of Okeleigh, Hereford, was once shewn an unoccupied cottage, in the empty rooms of which, an old poaching sinner had nearly one hundred birds alive, waiting for the dawn of September the first, to kill them, send them to market, and to pocket his ill-gotten gains, whilst he leered at the thoughts of giving "the Gents" much walking after the broods known to have been hatched on the adjacent fields. This gentleman, however, may be easily guarded against, by the simple measure of sticking up thorns over the fields the birds frequent; these fields can always be known with a little observation, for Partridges often "jug" in the same field, and on the same spot, for many nights in succession. This habit is well-known to the poacher, who carefully watches at twilight before he works his deadly net.

The number of Partridges on the whole is becoming less, not only from the loss of shelter caused by closely-trimmed hedges, and the closely-cut crops, but also from the increased number of sportsmen. The bird, however, is very prolific, and with ordinary winters and fine dry springs, there is no probability of its becoming extinct; favoured as it is, moreover, by most land-owners and land-

occupiers. The mode of Partridge shooting is certainly altered for the worse. The old sport with well-trained pointers, in which the intelligent assistance of the dogs added so much to the day's enjoyment, has had to give place to driving by large parties; or else, when the birds are in the turnips, the Hawk-Kite is flown to make the timid birds await their more certain destruction. The change is partly due to the loss of cover, rendering the Partridges more wild after the first few days in September; but the sport is less for man and dog, and the birds are more killed down.

> The thundering guns are heard on ev'ry side,
> The wounded coveys, reeling, scatter wide;
> The feather'd field-mates, bound by Nature's tie,
> Sires, mother, children, in one carnage lie.
>
> BURNS—*The Brigs of Ayr.*

When the Partridge has got its full winter plumage, and has been well scared by the gun, it becomes especially wild and unapproachable, and now if the birds are disturbed, they take long and rapid flights out of reach and out of sight. It is owing to this wariness, and to the fact that in fine and bright spring weather (like that of the present year, 1884) the birds are very prolific, that the Partridge still exists in such numbers.

There is a pretty theory in France, that the weight of Partridges killed, bears a direct reference to the productiveness of the soil, and the agricultural skill displayed upon it. In England their number depends more upon the care of the occupier. They are certainly fond of particular fields of light corn soils, and the experienced sportsman who knows the country, will always know where to find the birds on an estate.

Partridges abound in Herefordshire as they do in most of the counties of the British Isles, where the cats and the vermin are kept down, and where the guns are under some sort of control. In many parts of the county, however, where there is no preserving, and where the gun has full play, the scarcity of the Partridge, and indeed of all other kinds of game, is very marked; and but for the large estates where the game is protected, this admirable bird, the great favourite, alike, of the sportsman, the housekeeper, and the cook, would soon become extinct.

Genus—COTURNIX.

COTURNIX COMMUNIS—Quail.

An honest fellow enough, and one that loves Quails.
Shakespeare—*Troilus and Cressida V.*, 1.

The corn-land loving *Quayle*, the loveliest of our bits.
Drayton—*Polyolbion.*

Quails abound on all the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. They are the most productive of all winged creatures, says a French naturalist. They migrate north and south, in spring and autumn, in enormous quantities. The migration of Quails to certain Islands in the Archipelago, is what the migration of herrings is to Holland and Scotland. It gives occupation to the inhabitants for some two months of the year, and a profit that lasts much longer. The Bishop of the Island of Capri, in the Bay of Naples, is said to derive a revenue of £1,000 a year from his Quails; as many as 160,000 having been taken on that island alone, in a single year.

Canon Tristram in his "Natural History of the Bible" thinks that the Quails brought to the camp of the Israelites (Exodus xvi., 13, and Numbers xi., 31, 32) were on their northern spring migration from Africa. He himself, in Algeria, found, at daybreak, the ground covered with Quails for an extent of many acres, where on the preceding afternoon there had not been one. They would scarcely move, even when almost trodden upon; and on another occasion, in Palestine, he caught several with his hand.

Quails arrive in England in May, and leave in October. They soon make their presence known in spring, by their shrill triple note uttered almost all day long, "Whit-whit-whit," "Wet-my-lips," or "Click-clic-lick," as it may be variously interpreted. They are like diminutive Partridges in their habits, and also in their food, except that they live more on green plants, and on the seeds of weeds, grass, plantain, dock, persicaria, wild-vetch, and chickweed.* They are also fond of slugs, and insects, beetles, flies, etc. They

*Three thousand five hundred seeds of chickweed have been found in the crop of a single bird.

eat the corn too, as it ripens, but are very much more useful than injurious to agriculture.

Quails are exceedingly pugnacious birds. In spring, they have the most desperate encounters with each other. The Romans availed themselves of their quarrelsome nature for gambling purposes, and also in order to amuse themselves. Shakespeare alludes to this—

> And his Quails ever
> Beat mine inhoop'd at odds.
> —*Anthony and Cleopatra II.*, 3.

> Thus jealous Quails, or village cocks inspect
> Each other's necks, with stiffen'd plumes erect ;
> Smit with the wordless eloquence, they show
> The vivid passion of the threat'ning foe.

Quails are generally said to have been much more numerous in England fifty years ago, than they are now, and this certainly seems to have been the case in Herefordshire. On the southern side of the county, they were formerly frequently to be met with. On the Pengethley estate, in the vicinity of Ross, there is a field called "Quail Field," in the ancient terrier of the property. The soil is very light, and the crops of carrots which were formerly grown, instead of the turnips and swedes of the present day, were a favourite resort of the Quails. Mr. J. F. Symonds heard this from his relative, the owner of the estate, some thirty years ago, and he witnessed the following curious confirmation of the old character of the field. The squire was always the butt of the party on account of his bad shooting. On this particular occasion he had let off his gun many times with the usual harmless effect, until at last, in this very "Quail Field," he accidentally killed a Quail. It was a beautiful bird, in good condition, and the squire was so gratified at his success, that he constantly told this Quail chapter of his boyhood's reminiscences, to his friends in Herefordshire.

Mr. Lingwood in his notes, records Quails as occurring at "Belmont, 1847, and Llanwarne, 1852." In 1862, Mr. J. F. Symonds bought some live Quails in London, which had been intended for the tables in Belgravia, and after keeping them for some time at Okeleigh, on Broomy Hill, he turned them loose in pairs, hoping they would find their way to the corn-fields of

Breinton, and return again the following year. For some weeks after they were set free, their "calls" were heard, and then possibly they left to find their way to the Riviera, and the tables of Monte Carlo instead of Belgravia, for nothing more was seen or heard of them. In 1865, a Quail was killed at Weston Beggard; and on September 20th, 1867, Mr. H. C. Beddoe met with a bevy of five Quails on Adams' Hill, Breinton, and killed two of them, so that Mr. Symonds' birds may possibly have returned to breed there after all. In the same year, Mr. C. W. Radcliffe Cooke, M.P., met with a bevy of five Quails at Cobrey Park, near Ross, but none of them were killed.

In 1870, Mr. H. H. Wood's setter caught a young Quail at Great Brampton; in 1873, a Quail was shot at Highnam, in the parish of Tarrington. In 1879, Mr. C. W. Radcliffe Cooke, M.P., shot a Quail at Nuttall's Farm, Much Marcle; and on September 18th, 1881, he also shot another at Puredines, in the same parish. In 1880, Mr. W. Hill shot a single Quail at Braintrees, in Bishopstone parish. In 1881, a Quail was also shot at Lower Eaton by Mr. Pulley's keeper, and the bird is now in the Hereford Museum. The same year, September 9th, 1881, a Quail killed itself by flying against the telegraph wire on the railway between Ross and Backney, which bird is now in the possession of Mr. W. C. Blake, of Ross. On the 15th of September, Mr. H. C. Beddoe killed a young Quail, which got up from a stubble-field on the Swanston Court Farm, Dilwyn. This same year also, two were killed at Sutton at different times; one at Peterstow by Mr. Daw; and one at Withington by Mr. R. Prosser, so late as December 3rd.

The flesh of the Quail is much esteemed, but if eaten continuously it is a very heating food, says Yarrell, as indeed the children of Israel seem to have found it. It takes its place, however, on the sumptuous tables of the rich.

> A pasty costly-made
> Where Quail and Pigeon, Lark and Leveret lay,
> Like fossils in the rock, with golden yolks
> Imbedded and injellied.
>
> TENNYSON—*Audley Court.*

[Genus—Ortyx.]

[Ortyx virginianus—Virginian Colin.]

Introduced from North America, but not established.

Family—TETRAONIDÆ.

Genus—LAGOPUS.

[Lagopus mutus—Ptarmigan.]

Common on the highest mountains of Scotland.

LAGOPUS SCOTICUS—Red Grouse.

The squire, in scorn, will fly the house
For better game, and look for Grouse.
Swift.

The Moorcock springs, on whirring wings,
Amang the blooming heather.
Burns.

Until the Heath-cock shrilly crew,
And morning dawn'd on Benvenue.
Scott—*Lady of the Lake.*

This handsome bird is a true British species. It has existed here from time immemorial, and is not to be found elsewhere. Ornithologists call the Red Grouse the British representative of the Willow Grouse, *Lagopus albus*, which has so wide a range in the old and new world continents; and regard it as, probably, nothing more than an isolated descendant from this bird, varied by the food, and climatic peculiarities of the British Isles. The Red Grouse differs from the Willow Grouse, in its summer and winter plumage, in its call note, and in some of its habits. It is the only one of its tribe, for example, which does not turn white in winter, which science would explain, by saying, that it lost the power of doing so, when the necessity for the change passed away. Be this as it may, the result is admitted to be a distinct species, peculiar to Britain.

The Red Grouse is to be found on all the large tracts of waste land, the wild open moors of the British Isles, where the ling

(Calluna vulgaris) and the heaths *(Erica cinerea* and *Erica Tetralix)* flourish, and where the whortle-berries *(Vaccinium Myrtillus and Vitis-idæa)* grow freely. These uncultivated lands abound in Scotland, and there the Red Grouse is so plentiful as to get its specific name. (It would abound in Ireland too, if that unhappy country knew its own interests!) Such districts suit it so well that it requires but little protection from its natural enemies, the Buzzards, Hawks, Ravens, Crows, foxes, martins, and polecats. Sportsmen kill thousands upon thousands annually, without lessening the stock; they not only keep their natural enemies in check, but a more dangerous one still, the winter poacher; they also provide food for the birds during the severe weather of winter, and thus may be said to produce the great numbers they kill. The most dangerous enemies of the Grouse are the Crow, and the Hooded Crow. These cunning birds not only beat the moors for the eggs of the Grouse, which they are very clever in finding, but they are ever on the watch for the small shrill chirp the young chick gives, on escaping from the shell. It is the signal for a delicate feast to the Crow, and down he pounces, drives off the old birds, and devours all the brood he can catch, and also any eggs that remain unhatched.

Red Grouse vary very much in size and plumage, and it is said that game dealers can give a good guess, from their appearance, at the localities from which they come. Grouse are plentiful on all the ranges of the Black Mountains, and the late Hon. Humphrey B. Devereux, of The Highwood, Leominster, said that a season seldom passed, without his finding some wandering birds on Bircher Common, near the middle of the county. The Red Grouse on the Black Mountains, are larger in size and lighter in colour, than those from the Scotch Moors.

The Red Grouse, unlike its congener the Willow Grouse, does not perch on trees. Grouse are easily approached before the shooting season begins;

> The Moor-cock startled with a sudden cry
> Springs from beneath my feet.
>
> PRINCE.

but then they become very restless and shy, and are off at the distant sight of the sportsman. In winter, they pack together, and are very wary and unapproachable. On a fine clear frosty morning the cock bird will sit on a "knowe" or hillock, and crow at sunrise, and the peasants regard it as a sign of fine weather; and this morning crowing is more boisterous in early spring when they pair. The cock takes no share in the duties of incubation. He is not far off, however, and on the approach of danger, he utters his warning cry "kok, kok, kok." Directly the young birds are hatched both parents show great diligence and anxiety in attending to them.

The food of the Red Grouse consists chiefly of the extreme ends of ling and heather, whortle-berry leaves and berries, cranberries, and haws; they are especially fond of oats when they can meet with them. In severe weather they are driven to the low lands, and require their food to be supplied for them.

With earliest spring . . . . . .
. . . . . the Gawcock's call
Is heard from out the mist, high, on the hill;
But not till when the tiny heather bud
Appears, are struck the spring-time leagues of love.
Remote from shepherd's hut, or trampled fold,
The new-joined pair their lowly mansion pitch,
Perhaps beneath the juniper's rough shoots,
Or castled on some plant of tufted heath,
Surrounded by a narrow sable moat
Of swampy moss—

GRAHAME—*Birds of Scotland.*

Grouse shooting is a very fascinating sport. It is the first of the year. It follows immediately on the Parliamentary session, and occurs at the commencement of the professional holidays. It carries its followers into pure mountain air, and beautiful scenery; and it requires great perseverance and continued exertion to pursue it successfully.

And many a weary cast I made,
To cuittle the Muir-fowl's tail.

SCOTT—*Waverley.*

For most people too, it comes but once a year, for a short period, and it is therefore as pleasant in anticipation, as it is bright to look back upon.

Trout, salmon, Grouse, and deer,
Ply the sportsman all the year.

[Lagopus rupestris—Rock-Ptarmigan.]
Once in Sutherlandshire, and in Perthshire.

Genus—TETRAO.

TETRAO TETRIX—Black Grouse

> On wing of jet, from his repose
> In the deep heath, the Black-cock rose.
> Scott—*Marmion.*

The Black-cock in appearance and in habit seems intermediate between the Red Grouse and the Pheasant. He is partial to the heather and the moor, but he prefers the upland valleys and swamps, interspersed with birch and alder trees; wide open lands with patches of bracken, and here and there a cover of Spruce or Scotch Fir, and plenty of water. He is ready, so to speak, to breakfast with the Red Grouse on heather shoots, or the leaves and berries of the whortle-berry or bog myrtle; and to dine with the Pheasant in the corn-fields of the lowlands; but will resort in either case for his leisure, to his favourite localities.

The Black-cock is a meet companion for the Moor-fowl and the Woodcock, and like them he must retire before the increasing cultivation of the land. He is polygamous like the Pheasant. He is a shy and very wary bird, and though he may attend but little to the duties of the family, he seems ever on the alert for any danger that may threaten the community at large. In an open country he is therefore exceedingly difficult to approach.

> Good morrow to thy sable beak,
> And glossy plumage, dark and sleek,
> Thy crimson moon and azure eye,
> Cock of the heath, so wildly shy.
> J. Baillie—*The Black-cock.*

Black-Grouse still breed in Herefordshire. In the wild picturesque open country between Cusop Hill and the Black Mountains, in the parish of Craswell they are annually to be found, and usually breed there. Walter Savage Landor, when living at Llanthony about 60 years ago, is said to have introduced Black-

game there from Scotland, but this introduction is scarcely necessary to explain their presence at Craswell, since they are to be found on the Begwn Hill, (not ten miles distant as the Crow flies), and other places in Radnorshire. Mr. Beavan of the Craswell Abbey Farm, states, that in 1879, there was a cross-bred family on the farm between a cock Pheasant and Grey-hen. In 1881, there was a nest of Black-game in a field close to the foot of the Black Mountains, and five young ones were reared. A Black-cock and Grey-hen were shot that year, and the Black-cock was stuffed, and is preserved at the Abbey Farm. In 1883, there was again a cross-bred family on the farm, but this time between a Black-cock and a hen Pheasant, and the young birds were reared. In 1884 there was a nest of true Black-game in the parish of Craswell, though beyond the Abbey Farm, and fourteen young birds were observed; and in October, a fine old Black-cock was shot there by Mr. Beavan.

Wandering specimens of Black-game have been seen and killed in many of the wooded districts of the county. About the year 1840, a Black-cock was flushed from the undergrowth of heather and bilberry in Mainswood on the Stoke Edith estate; and he, or another bird, was shortly afterwards killed at Much Cowarne. In Morris's "British Birds," it is stated that a Grey-hen was killed on Mr. J. H. Arkwright's estate, at Hampton Court, in March, 1850. About 1874, a Grey-hen was disturbed from the woods at Stoke Edith.

The late Hon. Humphrey Devereux had seen and killed Black-game on Bircher Common for several years in succession; and in the extensive wild districts on the northern side of the county, as Shobdon, High Vinnalls, &c.—wandering birds are still not unfrequently seen, as might be expected, since Black-game exist both in Radnorshire and Shropshire.

Black-game fly heavily, but they fly high and very fast, and sometimes for considerable distances. With a little care and protection, Black-game might become much more plentiful in Herefordshire than they are now, for without either they maintain their existence in the wild wastes of Cornwall.

No more the Black-cock struts along the heath,
Spreads the jet wing, or flaunts the dark-green hair
In laboured flight, the tufted moors to gain.
But far remote, on flagging plume he flies,
Or shuts in death his ruddy, sparkling eyes.
LEYDEN—*Scenes of Infancy.*

[TETRAO UROGALLUS—Capercaillie.]
Formerly in Northern England—now in Scotland.

[Order—HEMIPODII.]
[Genus—TURNIX.]
[TURNIX SYLVATICA—Andalusian Hemipode.]
Only three examples in England.

ORDER—FULICARIÆ.
FAMILY—RALLIDÆ.
GENUS—RALLUS.
RALLUS AQUATICUS—WATER-RAIL.

The Water-Rail is a summer visitant, and breeds here. It is sparsely distributed throughout the county, but it is so shy a bird that it is probably less rare than it is supposed to be. Of late years it is not unfrequently seen by railway passengers, as the train passes by the reedy, shallow pools, or marshy spots the bird frequents. Like other wild and shy animals, it has become accustomed to the noise of the trains, and does not hide itself as they pass.

The narrow compressed shape of the Water-Rail enables it to pass easily through the thickest herbage, and it will only rise in flight to escape the dog. It flies slowly and heavily, with its legs hanging down, and in its long journeys of migration must be greatly aided by the wind. Its food is worms, snails, slugs, frogs' spawn and young frogs, aquatic insects and green herbage. Water-Rail have been killed in many places in the county, and one this year (1884), was found behind some boxes in the Goods Department, at the Ross railway station.

Genus—PORZANA.

PORZANA MARUETTA—Spotted Crake.

The Spotted, or Water Crake is a very local bird in Herefordshire. It is aquatic in its habits, and frequents the sides of streams and lakes in the neighbourhood of bogs, or marshy places, and lives on the worms, slugs, and aquatic insects it finds there. A few pairs visit the county most summers, and there is every probability that it breeds here. Four specimens have been brought to the Museum at varying intervals from April to June, during the last four years (1880—1884), which all came from small streams or marshy places in the valley of the Lugg.

[Porzana bailloni—Baillon's Crake.]
A rare visitant, but known to have once bred in Norfolk.

[Porzana parva—Little Crake.]
Somewhat rare in England. Found in Norfolk.

Genus—CREX.

CREX PRATENSIS—Corn-Crake.

[*Land-Rail—Yarrell.*]

Art thou a sound, and nothing but a sound?
—Go round the field, and round the field, and round,
You find my voice for ever changing ground;
And, while your ear pursues my creaking cry,
You look as if you heard me with your eye.
Montgomery—*Birds.*

Oft does thy call at midnight silence break,
Now here, now there, thy desultory call.
Grahame—*Birds of Scotland.*

The Corn-Crake, or Land-Rail, is another of the sportman's favourites in the field or on the table. It is a summer visitor, and varies considerably in numbers in different years. The rough harsh

"crake" that sometimes seems to shake the ground when heard from the meadows, or corn-fields, towards the end of April, is yet one of the pleasant sounds of spring. The note is believed to be uttered by the male bird alone, in search of his mate. He seems restless, and ever on the alert through the long night, until he has found her, being thus the earliest bird ;

> The Corn-Crake's call
> In mist-veiled meeds awakes the nestling Lark.
> GRAHAME—*British Georgics.*

The rivalry of the birds is often excited to their destruction, by imitating the "crake" by rubbing together the notched edges of dry rib-bones, or even by drawing the thumb-nail, or a stick, sharply along the teeth of a comb. The gun is held ready, and as the angry bird crosses a track mown in the grass, it is easily shot.

The Corn-Crake is very generally spread throughout Herefordshire, and nests are annually mown out in cutting the grass. In September they are generally found on the barley-stubbles, or seed-clover ; but during the last few cold seasons, seldom more than a single bird, or at most a brace, is added to the bag after a long day's shooting.

The food of the Corn-Crake consists of slugs, snails, seeds or corn, and green herbage. The bird is highly valued for the table. "Railes of the land deserve to be placed next the Partridge, for their flesh is as good as their feeding is good, and they are not without cause preferred to Noblemen's Tables," says Dr. Thos. Muffett, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. And Drayton also speaks of

> The Rayle, that seldom comes but upon rich men's spits !
> —*Polyolbion—Cant XXV.*

The Land-Rail is difficult to flush, and flies so heavily that it is not easy to understand how it can accomplish its long migratory flight. Grahame, in his truthful description says :—

> Behold the Corn-Craik ; she too wings her way
> To other lands . . . . . .
> Though weak her wing contrasted with her bulk.
> Seldom she rises from the grassy field
> And never till compelled ; and when upraised,
> With feet suspended awkwardly she flies.
> —*Birds of Scotland.*

Notwithstanding all this, the Corn-Crake manages to reach the coasts of Africa, and even penetrate to its centre. As was noticed in speaking of the Water-Rail, a strong wind seems essential to its flight.

His torpid wing the Rail exulting tries,
Mounts the soft gale, and wantons in the skies.
DARWIN—*Loves of Plants.*

Like many other birds the Corn-Crake will very cunningly put on the semblance of death, when exposed to danger from which it is unable to escape; several instances are recorded by Yarrell, and other writers.

Burns could not fail to notice the loud evening "crake" of the Land-Rail:

Mourn clam'ring Craiks, at close of day
'Mang fields of flowering clover gay
—*Elegy.*

GENUS—GALLINULA.

GALLINULA CHLOROPUS—MOOR-HEN.

To lurk the lake beside
Where Coots in rushy dingles hide
And Moor-cocks shun the day.
SHENSTONE.

This well-known bird is very abundant throughout the county. It is to be found on all ponds, pools, or watercourses, where there are plenty of reeds, rushes, flags, or other plants to give it shelter. It is a very lively, active bird, very amusing to watch, and is thus very ornamental. On moats or ponds close to the house or farm-yard, it soon becomes tame and sociable, feeds with the poultry and seems half domesticated. It swims very well, with a nodding motion of the head, as it turns quickly from side to side to catch an insect, or feed on a water-plant. It likes to graze on the adjoining grass, and flirts its tail oddly as it walks along.

The Moor-hen is very prolific, and when undisturbed will bring off three broods in the course of the summer. In the winter when the ponds are frozen over, it takes refuge in plantations, thick

bushes or hedge-rows, and resorts to rivers and running streams, where many are killed. A few years since, a Moor-hen built its nest in the bough of a willow tree overhanging the pond at Vennwood, at a height of twelve or fourteen feet from the surface of the water.

Genus—FULICA.

FULICA ATRA—Coot.

> The *Coot*, bald, else clean black, that whitenesse it doth beare,
> Upon the forehead starr'd, the Water-hen doth wear
> Upon her little tayle, in one small feather set.
>
> Drayton—*Polyolbion, 25th Song.*

The Bald-Coot visits all the larger ponds and ornamental pieces of water throughout the county, but it is not very abundant. In some ponds, as at the Mynde, Berrington, and Shobdon, they are allowed to breed; and in a few others they do so in spite of the keepers, where the aquatic vegetation is sufficiently dense to afford them protection.

Coots feed on aquatic insects, worms, slugs, and water-plants; if other food is scarce, they feed readily on grass; grain they devour with eagerness, picking it up even quicker than our domestic poultry. They move as easily on the land as on the water, and though they prefer to roost among the tall rushes in the midst of a piece of water, they will ascend a tree if other covert fails them.

The nests of the Coot are very large, and amazingly strong and compact.—Hewitson says, "they are sometimes built on a tuft of rushes, but more commonly among reeds; they are supported by those that lie prostrate on the water, whilst others have their foundations at its bottom, and are raised till they become from six to twelve inches above the surface, sometimes in a depth of one and a half or two feet. They are composed of flags and broken reeds, finer towards the inside, and contain from seven to ten eggs." Bishop Stanley says that the Coot sometimes seems to prefer a

floating nest, in which case she guards against the risk of wind or flood, by fastening her nest to the reeds or rushes, so that it can rise and fall with the water. If the Coot is disturbed and compelled to leave her nest, she rapidly covers her eggs by picking right and left at the rushes near, and a careless observer might easily pass the nest as deserted and empty.

The "Sooty Coot," as Burns calls it, is a lively active bird.

> The wanton Coot the water skims.
> BURNS—*Song.*

> The Coot dives merry in the lake.
> SCOTT—*Marmion.*

It swims well, and will dive long distances, as much, it is said, as a hundred yards. It walks well on the broad leaves of the water-lilies.

> There have I watched the downy Coot
> Pacing with safe and steady foot
> The surface of the floating field;
> And though the elastic floor might yield
> In chinks, and let the waters flow,
> Yet was the tremulous region true
> To that rough traveller passing through.
> FABER—*The Cherwell.*

"If a gentleman wishes to have plenty of wild-fowl on his pond," says Colonel Hawker, "let him preserve the Coots, and keep no tame Swans. The reason that all wild-fowl seek the company of the Coots is because these birds are such good sentries, to give the alarm by day, when the fowl generally sleep."

Coots are resident with us throughout the year, but make partial migrations in severe weather, from pond to pond, or even to salt water when the ponds are frozen. They are very abundant on Llangorse Lake, a few miles outside the margin of the county.

> I come from haunts of Coot and Hern.
> TENNYSON—*The Brook.*

Where Coots are very numerous they will defend themselves against birds of prey, such as the Kite, or even the White-tailed Eagle, by collecting in a dense body, and suddenly flashing up with their wings such a sheet of water, that it will completely baffle their enemy.

ORDER—ALECTORIDES.

[Family—GRUIDÆ.]

[Genus—GRUS.]

[GRUS COMMUNIS—Crane.]

A rare straggler to Britain.

FAMILY—OTIDIDÆ.

GENUS—OTIS.

[OTIS TARDA—Great Bustard.]

Formerly a resident in England, but now exterminated, and only a rare straggler.

OTIS TETRAX—LITTLE BUSTARD.

This very rare bird seems to have visited Herefordshire on one occasion. There is a specimen in the Hereford Museum from the collection of the late Mr. Moss, of Ross, who stated that it was shot in the neighbourhood of Dorstone. Nothing further is known of it.

[Genus—HOUBARA.]

[HOUBARA MACQUEENI—Macqueen's Bustard.]

[*Otis macqueeni—Yarrell.*]

Once occurred in Lincolnshire.

ORDER—LIMICOLÆ.

FAMILY—ŒDICNEMIDÆ.

GENUS—ŒDICNEMUS.

ŒDICNEMUS SCOLOPAX—STONE-CURLEW.

Thicknee or Norfolk Plover, Great Plover, Thick-kneed Bustard, Whistling Plover, are all synonyms of this bird. A wanderer has once visited Herefordshire. Mr. R. M. Lingwood in his notes says, "Seen in the flesh at Baker's (a bird-stuffer in Hereford), 1854, the bird killed at Lyde," near Hereford.

FAMILY—GLAREOLIDÆ.

GENUS—GLAREOLA.

GLAREOLA PRATINCOLA—COLLARED PRATINCOLE.

This very rare straggler from Southern Europe sometimes appears in Herefordshire. A specimen was shot at Fownhope, in 1854, which is now in the Hereford Museum. One was also seen at Clyro, in 1880, by the Messrs. Baskerville, who knew the beautiful bird at once, from having frequently seen it abroad, where it is plentiful.

FAMILY—CHARADRIIDÆ.

GENUS—CURSORIUS.

CURSORIUS GALLICUS—CREAM-COLOURED COURSER.

A specimen of this rare visitor from Africa was shot at Backney Marsh, near Ross, in 1852. It passed into the possession of the late Mr. Moss, and is now with his collection at the Hereford Museum.

GENUS—CHARADRIUS.

CHARADRIUS PLUVIALIS—GOLDEN PLOVER.

> From the shore
> The Plovers scatter o'er the heath
> And sing their wild notes to the listening waste.
> SHENSTONE.

The Golden Plover, Yellow Plover, or Whistling Plover, is not common in Herefordshire. A small flock is occasionally seen in late autumn or winter on the western side of the county, and a few pairs breed on the Black Mountains. The specimens in the Hereford Museum come from that neighbourhood.

The Golden Plover is a very interesting bird in many respects. It changes its plumage in an extraordinary way. The under

portions of the body which are greyish-white in winter become black in spring, partly from new feathers, and partly from a change of colour in those that remain.

This bird from the earliest times has been considered very delicate in flavour, and was formerly more esteemed than the Woodcock. It is still sold for the table in considerable numbers. In the L'Estrange "Household Book" (1520) the price is noticed as two-pence each.

As a shepherd's barometer too, the Golden Plover is highly esteemed. When the birds are restless, wheeling about rapidly, now high, now low, uttering their wild whistling notes so sweet and plaintive, approaching bad weather is indicated, and the warning is never unheeded. Lastly, they share with the Lapwing the persistent notice of the presence of a strange object, whether from curiosity or from fear, which, in the days of religious persecution, often betrayed the fugitive to his pursuers. In Scotland they are abundant, and a Scotch poet says:—

> Thou, hovering o'er the panting fugitive
> Through dreary moss and moor hast screaming led
> The keen pursuer's eye; oft hast thou hung
> Like a death flag above the assembled throng,
> Whose lips hymned praise.
>
> GRAHAME—*Birds of Scotland.*

GENUS—SQUATAROLA.

SQUATAROLA HELVETICA—GREY PLOVER.

The small additional toe, places the Grey Plover in a different class to the Golden Plover. It is nevertheless closely allied to it, in its curious change of plumage, its general appearance, and its excellence on the table; it is, however, a larger bird, and more rare. Its winter migrations into Herefordshire seem to have occurred more frequently of late years. Two Grey Plovers were killed on the Lugg meadows, in 1878, and brought to the Free Library; three—one from Bacton, and two from Old Castle were also brought

there in 1880; and two were shot at Sugwas, in 1882, which are now in the Hereford Museum.

The Grey Plover is excellent eating. Dr. Muffett, in Queen Elizabeth's time, wrote both of it, and of the other Plovers, with a delicate appreciation worthy of an epicure. "The gray Plover is so highly esteemed, that this Proverb is raised of a curious male-contented stomack, '*a gray Plover cannot please him.*' Yet to some, the green (Golden) Plover seemeth more nourishing; and to others, the Lapwing, which indeed is savory and light of digestion, but nothing comparable to Plovers."

[Genus—ÆGIALITIS.]

[ÆGIALITIS CANTIANA—Kentish Plover.]

A somewhat rare visitor—but remains to breed in Kent and Sussex.

[ÆGIALITIS CURONICA—Little Ringed Plover.]

A rare straggler to England.

[ÆGIALITIS HIATICULA—Ringed Plover.]

Common on almost all our coasts.

[ÆGIALITIS VOCIFERA—Killdeer Plover.]

Once near Christchurch, Hants.

GENUS—EUDROMIAS.

EUDROMIAS MORINELLUS—DOTTEREL.

This neat, pretty little bird, is very rarely seen in Herefordshire. The specimen in the Hereford Museum was killed some years since at Backney Marsh, near Ross. A small flock, or "trip," was seen by Mr. D. R. Chapman, at Letton, in 1878, but there is no further record of its occurrence.

The Dotterel has the character of being a foolish bird, and is said to get thus both its English and Latin names (*morinellus* being by some associated with *morio*, a Fool or Jester). But the fact is probably the other way; Dotterels are not so called because they resemble men that *dote*, and are foolish; but silly men are compared to Dotterels, because they are considered as silly birds. Oddly enough, some other water-birds are regarded as foolish, and the words *Goose* and *Gull*, *Booby* and *Noddy* are not complimentary when applied to human beings.

Gesner, in his "Historia Animalium," (1585) cites a description sent him by Dr. Key, which Willughby renders as follows:—"It (the Dotterel) is taken in the night time by the light of a candle by imitating the gesture of the Fowler: For if he stretches out an Arm, that also stretches out a Wing; if he a Foot that likewise a Foot; In brief, whatever the Fowler doth, the same doth the Bird; and so being intent upon men's gestures it is deceived, and covered with the Net spread for it. I call it *morinellus* for two reasons, first because it is frequent amongst the *Morini* (Flemmings); and next because it is a foolish bird even to a Proverb, we calling a foolish dull person a Dotterel."

> Most worthy man, with thee 'tis even thus,
> As men take Dotterels so hast thou ta'en us;
> Which as a man his arm or leg doth set,
> So this fond bird will likewise counterfeit.
>
> DRAYTON—*To Coryat.*

Drayton again alludes to the same fancy;

> The *Dotterell*, which we thinke a very daintie dish,
> Whose taking makes such sport, as man no more can wish,
> For as you creepe, or cowere, or lye, or stoupe, or goe,
> So marking you (with care) the Apish bird doth doe;
> And acting everything, doth never marke the net,
> 'Till he be in the Snare, which men for him have set.
>
> —*Polyolbion, 25th Song.*

The Dotterel is very good eating, and has long held this repute. In the Northumberland "Household Book" (c 1512) this entry occurs: "Item Dottrells to be bought for my Lorde when thay ar in season and to be had at jd. a pece." They have certainly not lost their esteem, for "they sell now," says Yarrell, "in the London game-shops for as much as seven or eight shillings the couple."

Genus—VANELLUS.

VANELLUS VULGARIS—Lapwing.

The building Rook 'ill caw from the windy tall elm-tree,
And the tufted Plover pipe along the fallow lea.
Tennyson—*The May Queen.*

The Lapwing, Peewit, or Crested Plover, is so common a bird, that its well-known cries have a pleasant association with spring. In all the low-lying or marshy districts of the county this beautiful and interesting bird is to be found; and in the autumn and winter months, flocks of many hundreds join together. In the broad valley of the Wye, which takes Eardisley for its centre, they are more numerous than elsewhere, and here in April and May the women and children seek their eggs for sale.

From the grey moor on feeble wing,
The screaming Plovers idly spring.
Warton.

Lapwings are restless and watchful birds. They have sentinels when together in flocks, and are very difficult of approach; and they are still more shy when they take their fresh plumage and separate for nesting purposes.

In the Spring the wanton Lapwing gets himself another crest.
Tennyson—*Locksley Hall.*

The Lapwing nests in the most unprotected places, but seems endowed with a proportionate caution. So watchful is the bird that she can never be seen on her nest, or even be seen to leave it; and hence it has been supposed by some observers, that she does not incubate.

Hence, around the head
Of wandering swain, the white-wing'd Plover wheels
Her sounding flight, and then directly on
In long excursion skims the level lawn,
To tempt him from her nest.
Thomson—*Spring.*

The great anxiety shown to protect their eggs and young, often defeats its object with those who know their habits, and serves to point out the locality of the nests. Sometimes, they will fly and scream over the head of a visitor, and at other times they will pretend to be unable to fly, and flutter along the ground.

The Plover fondly tries
To lure the sportsman from her nest,
And fluttering on with anxious cries
Too plainly shows her tortured breast.
Oh let him conscious of her care
Pity her pains, and learn to spare.
SHENSTONE.

In the South of Scotland, since the days of Charles II., when the Covenanters were so relentlessly persecuted, the Plover has always been considered an unlucky bird. Its jealous anxiety at the presence of a strange visitor to its haunts, and its screaming cries about him, have often exposed the poor fugitive to his enemies even after nightfall.

But though the pitying sun withdraws his light,
The Lapwings' clamorous hoop attends their flight.
Pursues their steps where'er the wanderers go,
Till the shrill scream betrays them to their foe.
LEYDEN—*Scenes of Infancy.*

The same noisy jealousy, however, calls assistance, now and again, to some poor wounded man. The Tyrwhitts, an old Lincolnshire family, bear three Peewits for their arms, in consequence, it is said, of the founder of the family Sir Hercules Tyrwhitt, when wounded on the moor, being thus saved by the birds.

The food of the Lapwing consists of the worms, slugs, caterpillars, and insects that frequent wet marshy places. In the autumn and winter, the bird is considered good on the table. It is not, however, equal to the Golden Plover notwithstanding the French proverb,

"Qui n'a mangé grive ni vanneau
N'a jamais mangé bon morceau."

The Lapwing is resident throughout the year, except in very severe weather. It is however partially migrant, for large flocks sometimes come over from the continent.

GENUS—STREPSILAS.

STREPSILAS INTERPRES—TURNSTONE.

There is a specimen of the Turnstone in the Hereford Museum labeled "Backney Marsh, 1859" by the late Mr. Moss. There is no other record of its occurrence in the county.

GENUS—HÆMATOPUS.

HÆMATOPUS OSTRALEGUS—OYSTER-CATCHER.

The Pied Oyster-catcher, or Sea-Pie, as the sailors call it, from its distinct black and white colour, not unfrequently visits Herefordshire. Nearly every winter one or two specimens are shot in the county, on the banks of the Rivers Wye and Lugg. The three specimens in the Hereford Museum were obtained—one from Ross; one from Moccas, where it was shot on the banks of the Wye by Mr. S. George; and the third from the Lugg meadows, which was secured by Mr. D. R. Chapman the same year, 1879. Another specimen was also shot near the river Lugg in 1881.

FAMILY—SCOLOPACIDÆ.

GENUS—RECURVIROSTRA.

[RECURVIROSTRA AVOCETTA—Avocet.]

Formerly resident on the east coast of England, now very rare.

GENUS—HIMANTOPUS.

[HIMANTOPUS CANDIDUS—Black-winged Stilt.]

A rare straggler to England.

GENUS—PHALAROPUS.

[PHALAROPUS HYPERBOREUS—Red-necked Phalarope.]

A regular summer visitor to the islands on the coasts of Scotland; occasionally met with during passage in England.

PHALAROPUS FULICARIUS—GREY PHALAROPE.

There are three recorded instances of the occurrence of the Grey Phalarope in Herefordshire. Mr. R. M. Lingwood mentions one as having been shot at Allensmore in 1847. Mr. W. C. Blake,

of Ross, states that a Grey Phalarope was brought to him, early in October 1881, by a lad who had killed it by a sling, while it was swimming on the River Wye, near Backney Bridge. The bird appeared by no means shy, and was swimming near the bank when killed. This specimen has been carefully preserved, and is in the possession of Mr. Blake. The Rev. D. Arthur F. Saunders of Sutton St. Nicholas, near Hereford, was so fortunate as to meet with the Grey Phalarope, in his own parish. The bird had been noticed on two occasions, swimming in some deep pools in the River Lugg—and on the 9th October, 1885, Mr. Saunders shot the bird from the bank of one of the Lugg meadows, as it was swimming on the river. He had the bird, which was a female in good plumage, carefully preserved, and it is now in his possession.

Genus—SCOLOPAX.

SCOLOPAX RUSTICULA—Woodcock.

As Woodcocks when their plumes are grown,
Borne on the winds' wing, and their own,
Forsake the countries where they're hatched,
And seek out others to be catched.
Butler—*Imitation of the French.*

The arrival of the first flight of Woodcocks is always an era in the sportsman's year. There is an old Herefordshire saying that, "if the full moon in October falls between the 10th and 25th days of the month, then if the wind and weather are favourable, Cocks will be plentiful, but if otherwise as to the moon, the Cocks go elsewhere." Their abundance or scarcity really depends very much on the severity of the weather in the north of Europe, for if the weather should be stormy, and the wind unfavourable, very many will perish in the sea.

The first flights to arrive are the females, and it is often many days before the males appear. They generally come in hazy weather, with a wind blowing from the North East. Their numbers vary

very much according to the season, but there is no rule that applies to all places equally. The coverts in Herefordshire are not generally shot early enough for the Woodcocks, or more would be killed. The best days on record are these ; on December 9th, 1873, twenty-one Woodcocks were killed in the woods at New-Lodge, in the parish of Peterchurch ; and in the following year, at about the same time, the result of four successive days' shooting, was forty Woodcocks. As a general rule, from four to ten are killed in the early quarter of the December moon, and they are found chiefly on the high ground on the south side of the Golden Valley.

At Stoke Edith, Mr. Cook, the park-keeper, whose father was the head game-keeper, and who has himself always lived on the estate, thinks that upon the whole, Woodcocks are more plentiful than formerly. He remembers one or two extraordinary seasons when from twenty-five to thirty couples were killed, but nothing approaching this has happened in recent years. The exact numbers killed on the estate of late years, the head-keeper gives as follows :—

1871	... ...	16	1878	...	9
1872	... ...	20	1879	... ...	8
1873	... ...	27	1880	... ...	10
1874	... ...	17	1881	... ...	6
1875	... ...	18	1882	... ...	15
1876	... ...	14	1883	... ...	11
1877	... ...	19	1884	... ...	21

The Woodcock score on the Hampton Court estate is as follows :—

1869	... ...	23	1877	... ...	32
1870	... ..	6	1878	... ...	29
1871	... ...	19	1879	... ...	15
1872	... ..	6	1880	.. ...	8
1873	... ...	21	1881	... ...	5
1874	... ...	18	1882	. . ...	19
1875	... ...	23	1883	... ...	32
1876	... ...	20	1884	... ...	30

The last season (1884) was a remarkable one generally throughout the county, and it is very many years since the game-shops in Hereford have been so well supplied.

Woodcocks lie quiet by day, and at nightfall visit their feeding grounds.

> In doubtful day the Woodcock flies.
> GAY.

A narrow dip in the hills, or the tracts and glades in the woods through which the birds pass, are often called "cockshoots." There are several in the county, where from time immemorial, Woodcocks have been waylaid while flying through, by sportsmen with their guns or nets. In the dip of the hill above Stoke Edith, two permanent poles were erected, and at the proper season a fine net was hung across from one to the other. When struck by the bird flying, it was drawn together by the concealed fowler. Mr. Cook thinks these poles were first put up about sixty years ago. They were not long in use, since they were removed about forty years since. They probably did not pay. Mr. Cook remembers three Woodcocks being taken one night, and thinks this was the greatest catch ever made.

Certain localities in woods have a peculiar charm for the Woodcock, as is well-known to sportsmen;

> Oft at this season, near an oozy spring
> O'erhung by alder boughs, the Woodcock haunts.
> GRAHAME—*British Georgics.*

If one bird is shot, another will be found on the same spot at the next visit, if there are any in the neighbourhood. By day they are fond of reposing in the dry bottoms of brake or rushes, often preferring, as Sir Humphrey Davy pointed out, the shade of a laurel or holly bush.

There are two sounds uttered by the Woodcock; one, a kind of muffled clack, which they give sometimes when they are flushed; and the other, a sort of low whistle uttered at flight-time on spring evenings.

The number of Woodcocks that now remain to breed in this country is believed to exceed very largely that of former years. Yarrell attributes this fact to "the increase of plantations, especially

of fir covers in the vicinity of cultivated ground." This is certainly the case in Herefordshire, for now a year scarcely passes without some two or three well-authenticated instances of their breeding being recorded. The following letter, dated August 4th, 1852, sent by Mr. T. W. Bird, to *Bell's Life in London*, is the first on record.—"On the 3rd of May, 1848, as the keeper of Thomas Clarke, Esq., of Derndale, near Hereford, was going his rounds, he came to a spot in the Wellington cover, where a Hawk had plucked some small bird. Shortly afterwards, a bird which he took to be the Hawk, rose and darted into the wood. The keeper fired and killed it, and then discovered that he had shot a Woodcock. Retracing his steps, he found four young Woodcocks, apparently about a week old, and much resembling young Lapwings, running through the brushwood. The dead bird proved to be a female; and as her consort could not be discovered anywhere in the neighbourhood, the keeper took the young ones home and tried to rear them, but without success; they died on the third day. The parent bird and her young ones were preserved and are still in Mr. Clarke's possession."

On May 23rd, 1873, Dr. J. H. Wood put up two old birds from a soak in Mainswood. Mr. Cook has only known two instances of their breeding on the Stoke Edith estate. Many years ago a nest was found at Carnwood with three eggs in it. Under the promise of a reward to the labourers who found it, the nest was not disturbed, and the young birds were hatched off. In 1881, a pair nested in the park coppice, and the young birds in the down were seen on several occasions in the park, together with the old birds; and these latter were observed to make much the same fuss as the Partridge, in order to draw the attention from their young.

Mr. H. H. Wood, of Whitehouse, Vowchurch, says that "in 1881, on or about July 14th, five or six young Woodcocks got up before him, and dropped again within twenty or thirty yards. The reddish feathers of their tails looked bright and pretty in the sunshine." These birds had been seen by his men several times before. Mr. Wood thinks more Woodcocks stay than was formerly

the case. He saw one fly over his garden in June, 1884, and heard of others during the same summer at Poston Lodge. Mr. Wood once shot a Woodcock on August 14th, in mistake for a Hawk. It only weighed 9 oz., whereas the usual weight he has found to be from 11 oz. to 13 oz., though two birds that were killed on his estate weighed as much as 16 oz. From a notice sent to "Land and Water," Mr. S. Martin, of the Hermitage, Burghill, killed a Woodcock on December 5th, 1884, weighing 17 oz.

Mr. J. W. Lloyd, of Kington, says that the Woodcock breeds regularly in the northern parts of the county. It has been observed at Aymestrey, and The Haughwood, in 1882, 1883, 1884; at Berrington, in 1883, 1884; and at Dinmore Hill, in 1883, where many years ago, Woodcocks were occasionally seen in summer. Mr. W. C. Blake says they breed almost every year in the Perrystone woods, and this observation is confirmed by Mr. Davies, the head-keeper, who says he has met with the eggs, and also the young birds. Woodcocks have also been met with in the Whitfield woods; and twice within the last few years at Penyard Wood, near Ross.

The nest of the Woodcock is little more than a hollow amongst dry leaves in some well-sheltered situation, as under a holly, thorn, or bramble-bush. It is often formed at a considerable distance from the wet, boggy feeding-ground they delight in. It is a well-established fact that the old bird will carry its young by its claws, supported against the body by the beak, from place to place, either for its natural food, or to avoid danger.

> And lonely Woodcocks haunt the wat'ry glade.
> POPE.

The food of the Woodcock consists chiefly of earth-worms, which it hunts by scent, or perhaps, rather by the delicate sensation of the long bill. Hence has arisen the notion that Woodcocks do not eat solid food, but are sustained by the moisture they extract from boggy ground. Thus Byron says—

> "But man is a carnivorous production,
> He cannot live like Woodcocks upon suction."

In frosty weather they get to the springs, or if the frost is

very severe, to the sea-side, where they feed on the small shell-fish. Where the birds are plentiful, the holes they thus bore in the soft ground, guide the sportsman to set nooses of horsehair to catch them. Shakespeare makes many allusions to these snares.

> Ay, springes to catch Woodcocks.
> —*Hamlet*, I. 3.

> Now is the Woodcock near the gin.
> —*Twelfth Night II.*, 5.

> Ay, Ay; so strives the Woodcock with the gin.
> —*3rd King Henry VI., I.*, 4.

There is no record of their having been caught by this means in Herefordshire.

The Woodcock is not highly esteemed as an article of food in northern countries; and in the early part of the sixteenth century, it was valued in England at less than a Golden Plover. In the fifth Earl of Northumberland's "Household Book" (1512), the price of a Woodcock is stated to be one penny or three half-pence; and in the L'Estrange "Household Book," the reward for four Woodcocks on October 18th was fourpence; also in another instance, for three Woodcocks, sixpence. In Shakespeare's time it began to be better appreciated.

"He hath bid me to a calf's head, and a capon; shall I not find a Woodcock too?"—*(Much Ado V.*, 1.)

It was in Willughby's Ornithology that the well-known couplet first appeared—

> If the Partridge had the Woodcock's thigh,
> 'Twould be the best bird that ever did fly.

to which some modern writer has added:

> If the Woodcock had the Partridge's breast,
> 'Twould be the best bird that ever was dress'd.

To kill the first Cock of the day, is a feather in the cap of the lucky sportsman of the party.

> The Woodcock flutters; now he wav'ring flies;
> The wood resounds; he wheels, he drops, he dies.
> GAY—*Rural Sports.*

Another historical notice of the Woodcock may not be passed by. At one of the battues at Holkham, on November 20th, 1829,

the celebrated sculptor Chantrey, killed two Woodcocks at one shot, and was so pleased with his success, that he carved them in marble. Mr. Hudson Gurney suggested to him this simple inscription :

> Driven from the north where winter starved them,
> Chantrey first shot, and then he carved them.

The marble tablet still adorns the Library at Holkham.

Genus—GALLINAGO.

[Gallinago major—Great Snipe.]

A straggler to the British Islands.

GALLINAGO CÆLESTIS—Common Snipe.

> Hither the long and soft-billed Snipe resorts
> By suction nourish'd : here her house she forms ;
> Here warms her fourfold offspring into life.
> Grahame—*Birds of Scotland.*

The abundance of the Common Snipe has given way very much in Herefordshire, as elsewhere, to the reclamation by increased drainage of the wet marshy lands they delight in. They still come to us from the north, in numbers varying with the season, and are widely distributed throughout the county. They can scarcely be said to be plentiful anywhere in Herefordshire, but there are few sportsmen whose skill is not annually tried by the twisting, turning flight of the Snipe, as it rises before them. It is always welcomed, though never to be depended upon, since

> "The pallat-pleasing *Snite.*"
> Drayton—*Polyolbion.*

is much esteemed on the table. In Scotland, and Ireland, where they abound, their restlessness often indicates wet weather; thus Wilson calls it

> "The long-billed Snipe that knows the approaching rain."

Some few pairs remain to breed in the more secluded parts of the county. Mr. James W. Lloyd, of Kington, says "my son found two nests, in this parish, on April 18th, 1883, within the distance of a hundred yards from each other, each containing four eggs."

There are also other instances of the Snipe breeding in the northern and western sides of the county.

"Snipe are numerous in the Golden Valley," says the Rev. T. Powell, Rector of Dorstone, "and they breed there regularly." In his very interesting pamphlet on the Golden Valley he gives the following amusing account of a Dorstone mystery. "In the spring of 1875, 1879, and 1881, the inhabitants of the village were greatly agitated by sounds of an unearthly nature always heard at a given spot, and at a given time, between nine and ten o'clock at night. The spot where it occurred was about a quarter of a mile from the church, on the main road to Hay, close to a swampy plantation. Standing near the gate into this plantation, people could hear, high above, the movement of rapid wings cleaving the air in ascending and descending circles. There was also heard a sound as of the bleating of a kid mingled with the cry of an infant; now here, now there, now rising, now descending, often receding, then approaching, but never seen. At this spot, women and children assembled nightly for a fortnight, to hear and wonder: and then the mystery ceased. Natural history explains it as the action of the male Snipe, during the process of preparing by the female for incubation."

The swamp, where hums the dropping Snipe.
TENNYSON—*On a Mourner.*

GENUS—LIMNOCRYPTES.

LIMNOCRYPTES GALLINULA—JACK SNIPE.

[*Gallinago gallinula—Yarrell.*]

If I would time expend with such a Snipe
But for my sport and profit.
SHAKESPEARE—*Othello I.*, 3.

The Jack Snipe, Half Snipe, or Judcock, is not a common bird in Herefordshire. It occurs in isolated spots every winter, and is generally solitary. A Jack Snipe will sometimes afford a whole morning's shooting to a boy home for the Christmas holidays, for he is very difficult to hit, never flies far, and does not seem to mind being shot at.

[Genus—Limicola.]

[Limicola platyrhyncha—Broad-billed Sandpiper.]

A rare straggler to the British Islands.

Genus—TRINGA.

[Tringa maculata—Pectoral Sandpiper.]

A rare straggler to Britain.

[Tringa fuscicollis—Bonaparte's Sandpiper.]

A rare straggler to the British Islands.

TRINGA ALPINA—Dunlin.

This Sandpiper is not abundant in Herefordshire, but it frequently visits the larger rivers in the county. Mr. W. C. Blake says, "it is a frequent visitor to the Wye, near Ross, in winter, and several have been brought to me dead." In 1880, two were killed in the Lugg meadows, and exposed for sale in a game-shop in Hereford. There is no record of its having remained here to breed.

[Tringa minuta—Little Stint.]

Only met with in Britain during migration.

[Tringa temminckı—Temminck's Stint.]

Of regular, but rare occurrence during migration.

[Tringa minutilla—American Stint.]

A rare straggler to Britain.

[Tringa subarquata—Curlew Sandpiper.]

Not uncommon in Britain during spring and autumn.

[Tringa striata—Purple Sandpiper.]

Of occasional occurrence in Britain in winter.

TRINGA CANUTUS—KNOT.

The *Knot*, that called was *Canutus* Bird of old,
Of that great King of *Danes*, his name that still doth hold,
His apetite to please, that farre and neere was sought,
For him (as some have sayd) from *Denmarke* hither brought.
DRAYTON—*Polyolbion, 25th Song.*

This bird has been very rarely met with in Herefordshire. A Knot is recorded as having been killed at Dewsall, in 1879; and the Rev. W. Baskerville Mynors met with one at Llanwarne, in March, 1883.

In the early part of the sixteenth century the Knot was very highly esteemed as an article of diet. They were caught in nets, and regularly fattened for the table. Willughby says that, "being fed with white bread and milk, they grow very fat, and are accounted excellent meat." Camden (1607), first gives the origin of the name from Canute, which Willughby (1687) and later writers have adopted.

[Genus—MACHETES.]
[MACHETES PUGNAX—Ruff.]
Only seen now on migration.

[Genus—CALIDRIS.]
[CALIDRIS ARENARIA—Sanderling.]
Common in winter on the coasts of Britain.

[Genus—TRYNGITES.]
[TRYNGITES RUFESCENS—Buff-breasted Sandpiper.]
A rare straggler to Britain.

[Genus—ACTITURUS.]
[ACTITURUS LONGICAUDA—Bartram's Sandpiper.]
[*Bartramia longicauda—Yarrell.*]
A rare straggler to the British Islands.

Genus—TRINGOÏDES.

TRINGOÏDES HYPOLEUCUS—Common Sandpiper.

[*Totanus hypoleucus—Yarrell.*]

> Where the mossy riv'let strays
> Far from human haunts and ways.
> Burns.

The Summer Snipe, or Sand Lark as this bird is also called, is common on all the principal streams of the county. The whistling cry, "wheet! wheet! wheet!" is a very familiar sound to the fisherman, or to the wanderer on the river's bank, as the birds rise on his approach, to fly forwards to the next sand-bank on the opposite side of the river. They arrive early in April, remain a few weeks, then disappear, to come back for a longer stay in the autumn.

"The nidification of the Sandpiper," says Mr. W. C. Blake, "was formerly a mystery to me. Though the birds were common in the spring, I could obtain no instance of their nests or eggs being met with. Attention to the subject during the last few years has cleared the matter up. I noted the first appearance of the birds was during the first or second week of April; they remained until the end of May,—without nesting—and then disappeared until the middle of July, when they returned, bringing their fledged young ones with them. After careering about the shallow margins of the Wye, in small companies, until the end of September or beginning of October, they finally disappeared until the succeeding spring. I once heard the note of the Sandpiper on the 4th of June, and on the 27th of June, 1886, three Sandpipers were observed near Ross, but these latter may have been returned birds.

"The question arose—where did the Sandpiper go to breed, and why? I suspected they retired to the upper reaches of the river Wye and its tributary streams to secure greater retirement, and my impressions have been borne out by facts. Instances have come to my knowledge of Sandpipers breeding on the Lugg; and during the present season (June, 1887), a friend gave me an egg taken from the Wye bank, near Hay.

"No writer has, to my knowledge, mentioned this 'breeding migration.' Has the fact been overlooked, or may the district of Hereford, Ross, and Gloucester, be an exception to the rule? In this respect (speaking locally) the Sandpiper stands unique among all our visitants."

Another confirmation of this fact is supplied by Mr. James W. Lloyd, of Kington :—"Two years ago (1883), I was taken by a young man to see a nest he had found on the ground, on a hill near this town, by a small stream. On arriving at the spot he threw himself suddenly down, and caught the bird on her nest. It was a Sandpiper, and after admiring her slender form and elegant marking, she was set at liberty. Her beautiful eggs, which would have been deserted after such a disturbance, were taken, and now adorn my cabinet."

Genus—HELODROMAS.

HELODROMAS OCHROPUS—Green Sandpiper.

[*Totanus ochropus—Yarrell.*]

This bird, though a frequent spring and autumn visitant to the British Islands, has not been recorded as occurring in Herefordshire until quite recently. Mr. James W. Lloyd, of Kington writes, "that Green Sandpipers with their young have been seen both this year (1887) and last, during the late summer." He thinks it probable that they breed in the secluded parts of the county, though the eggs have not yet been discovered.

Professor Newton was the first to discover the curious fact, which has since been attested by other observers, that the Green Sandpiper lays its eggs in old deserted nests on trees, but always in the vicinity of water. The young birds will jump down from the nests without difficulty, and immediately hide themselves in the grass.

The Green Sandpiper is a shy watchful bird, and is generally found either alone, or in pairs. It bores a good deal for its food, which consists chiefly of small beetles, spiders, very small red worms, wood-lice, and small fresh-water snails, with a little vegetable matter. Its flight is rapid and glancing, and its note a remarkably shrill whistle.

Genus—TOTANUS.

[Totanus glareola—Wood-Sandpiper.]

A rare straggler, during migration, to Britain.

TOTANUS CALIDRIS—Redshank.

The Red-leg, or Redshank Sandpiper is a very rare visitor to Herefordshire. The only specimen recorded is one solitary wanderer, which during the spring migration northwards was shot on the banks of the Wye at Ruckhall, in 1830, and is now in the Hereford Museum.

TOTANUS FUSCUS—Spotted Redshank.

The Spotted Redshank, or Dusky Sandpiper is also a very rare visitor to the county. One stray migrant is reported by Mr. E. Pilley, to have been shot at Monkland, near Leominster, in 1881.

TOTANUS CANESCENS—Greenshank.

This bird has been occasionally met with in Herefordshire during the last few years: at Castleton, in 1879; at Aymestry in March, 1880; at Caplar in March, 1880; and at Letton in

October, 1883. Mr. W. C. Blake, of Ross, had a young male Greenshank brought to him on August 20th, 1886, which had been shot on the Wye, near the Weir End; no others were in company with it.

It is a shy, vigilant bird, and prefers open districts, where it can keep a better look-out against danger. There is a specimen in the Hereford Museum, in the collection of the late Mr. Moss, of Ross, but there is no history attached to it.

[Genus—MACRORHAMPHUS.]

[MACRORHAMPHUS GRISEUS—Red-breasted Snipe.]

A rare straggler to the British Islands.

GENUS—LIMOSA.

LIMOSA LAPPONICA—BAR-TAILED GODWIT.

> The Godwit running by the water's edge
> The little Curlews creeping from the sedge.
>
> JEAN INGELOW—*Four Bridges.*

The Common or Red Godwit, or Red-breasted Snipe as the bird is also called, is very handsome. In winter it frequents the muddy banks of rivers, or oozy banks of estuaries by the sea-side. Its food consists of insects, worms, small crustaceans and mollusks.

The Bar-tailed Godwit is but rarely met with in Herefordshire. There are only two recorded instances of its occurrence in the county; the first, mentioned by Mr. Lingwood, was shot on the river Lugg at Mordiford, in 1839; and the other on Carey Island, Fawley, in 1879, which bird is now in the Hereford Museum.

LIMOSA ÆGOCEPHALA—Black-tailed Godwit.

Nor Ortolans, nor Godwits, nor the rest
Of earthly names that glorify a feast.
Cowley—*Trans.*

The Black-tailed Godwit is unfortunately quite as rare as the Common Godwit, in Herefordshire.

It is as large as a Woodcock, and equally valuable on the table. In the sixteenth century it was considered an article of great luxury, for which the following authorities are quoted by Yarrell. Sir Thomas Browne says "they are accounted the daintiest dish in England." Ben Jonson says of them

Your eating
Pheasant, and Godwit here in London, haunting
The "Globes" and "Mermaids"; wedging in with lords
Still at the table.

and Thomas Muffett that "ever famous doctor in physick," as he is styled in the title page to "Health's Improvement," says, (page 99,) "a fat *Godwit* is so fine and light meat, that noblemen, yea, and merchants too, by your leave, stick not to buy them at four nobles a dozen." In Lincolnshire the fen-men formerly fattened them on bread and milk for the London market.

A specimen was shot on the river Lugg, in March, 1876, and is now in the Hereford Museum, and this is the only recorded instance of its occurrence here.

Genus—NUMENIUS.

[Numenius borealis—Esquimaux Curlew.]

A rare straggler to Britain.

NUMENIUS PHÆOPUS—Whimbrel.

To the locks the Curlew flocks
Wi' gleesome speed.
Burns—*Elegy.*

The Whimbrel Curlew, or Little Whaap is closely allied to the Common Curlew, but it is much more uncommon. It is a bird of

some size, nearly a pound in average weight, and very good eating. Would that it were common here, but Herefordshire cannot offer the wild desolate moorland districts, and barren tracts of ground, it delights to visit. One specimen only is recorded as having been killed in the county. This was shot at the mouth of the river Lugg, in April, 1881, and is now in the Hereford Museum.

NUMENIUS ARQUATA—Curlew.

Now wild and harsh the moorland music floats,
And clam'rous Curlews scream with long-drawn notes.
Leyden—*Scenes of Infancy.*

The wild cries of the Curlew are so associated with the retired moorland districts the bird frequents, that they seem peculiarly appropriate to each other. The sounds uttered in their ordinary flight are well represented by the words, "corlieu" or "courlie," and from hence the bird derives its English and French names; but should an intruder approach their eggs, or young, the old birds dash towards him and about him, with loud noisy screams that proclaim their anxiety, repeated again and again until they are left in peace.

Round his grey head the wild Curlew,
In many a fearless circle flew.
Scott—*The Lord of the Isles.*

Scream'd o'er the moss the scared Curlew.
Scott—*Harold the Dauntless.*

Throughout Scotland the Curlew is called a "Whaap" or "Whaup," which means a goblin with a long beak. Sir Walter Scott refers to this in the Black Dwarf (chap. ii.), where he makes Hobbie Elliot say: "What needs I care for the Mucklestane-Moor ony mair than ye do yoursell, Earnscliff? To be sure, they do say there's a sort o' worricows and lang-nebbit things about the land, but what need I care for them?" The same feeling of superstition is to be found at the fag end of a Highlander's prayer to be saved "from witches, warlocks, and aw lang-nebbed things." Saxby says that

the Shetlanders regard with horror the very idea of using so uncanny a bird as food; in fact, a visitor who did so was afterwards alluded to, almost in a whisper, as "the man who ate the Whaup."

The Curlew is very good eating, when young, and before it has had time to feed on the sea-shore, but it soon becomes unpalatable. It was formerly esteemed highly; in the L'Estrange "Household Book," it appears that a Curlew was worth from five to six pence (and even twelve pence in the Lord North Accounts), the price of three Woodcocks.

The Curlew is a very shy bird and difficult to approach; but his presence on the wild moors, and his cries are nevertheless very pleasant to the traveller.

Thus Hurdis speaks of

> A gentle Curlew bidding kind good-night
> To the spent villager.
> —*Favorite Village.*

The Curlew frequents the coasts through the winter, finding on the sea-shore the small crustacea, marine insects, worms, etc., which form its food, but in the spring it retires inland, to breed in the retired spots of hilly, marshy districts.

> The clamorous Curlew calls his mate.
> GILBERT WHITE.

The nest of the Curlew is slight; a few leaves or other dry materials, carelessly laid among long grass or heath, or in a tuft of rushes, is all that appears. They breed on the wilder moors of the county. Mr. James W. Lloyd exhibited two eggs at the Kimbolton meeting of the Woolhope Club, which had been taken with two others, on May 15th, 1880, from a hill within two miles of the town of Kington. In 1882, a pair of Curlews nested on the adjoining hill, and hatched out the young birds, some of which, however, were killed by shepherd dogs.

The Curlews breed regularly also on the Black Mountains, and sometimes on the Herefordshire portion of them. They rarely visit the centre of the county, but are still occasionally met with. Mr. Lingwood in his notes says: "very rare, seen in the flesh at

Baker's in Hereford, but whether killed in the county or not was doubtful." Mr. D. R. Chapman saw one not half-a-mile from the city, in April, 1883; and two days later, saw the same or another bird, in a swampy piece of meadow-land at Letton, near "Turner's boat."

ORDER—GAVIÆ.
FAMILY—LARIDÆ.
GENUS—STERNA.

[STERNA MACRURA—Arctic Tern.]
A regular summer visitant to the North of England.

STERNA FLUVIATILIS—COMMON TERN.

Like flocks of Sea-fowl driven,
When storms are on the wing.
MONTGOMERY—*Greenland.*

The Terns, or Sea-Swallows, are rare visitors to Herefordshire. They only visit us when driven inland by violent stormy weather at sea. They have, however, been seen on several occasions. Mr. Lingwood and Mr. Blight have recorded their occurrence in the valley of the river Wye (see Woolhope Transactions). In March, 1883, a couple of Terns were observed by myself and many other people, flying over the river from the Castle Green, up the valley until they passed out of sight.

[STERNA DOUGALLI—Roseate Tern.]
A summer visitant.

STERNA MINUTA—LITTLE TERN.

Not down the breeze more blithely flew,
Skimming the wave, the light Sea-mew.
SCOTT—*The Lord of the Isles.*

This pretty elegant bird, the Little or Lesser Tern, is also a very rare visitor to Herefordshire. A specimen was shot at Marden

in September, 1869, by Mr. Hugh Jenner, of Vennwood, when Partridge-shooting in a turnip-field. The weather had been very stormy for a few days previously, and it had probably been driven inland. It was carefully preserved, and is now in the hall of Vennwood House.

[STERNA CASPIA—Caspian Tern.]
A rare summer visitor.

[STERNA ANGLICA—Gull-billed Tern.]
An irregular summer visitant to this country.

STERNA CANTIACA—SANDWICH TERN.

. . . . . I look'd
And saw a bird slow sailing over head,
His long white pinions by the sunbeam edged
As though with burnish'd silver; never yet
Heard I so sweet a music as his cry!
SOUTHEY—*Madoc.*

Mr. W. C. Blake, of Ross, had a beautiful specimen of the Sandwich Tern brought to him alive on October 22nd, 1886. It was picked up in Alton Street, Ross, having come into collision with a street-lamp. Its companion settled on the ground beside it, uttering cries of distress, which drew attention to the injured bird. Mr. Blake endeavoured to revive it, but without success; it died in an hour or two. It was preserved, and is now in his excellent collection of birds.

This bird was probably driven inland by the recent severe gales, as it is very unusual for the Sandwich Tern to remain in England later than September. The return migration commences in August.

STERNA FULIGINOSA—SOOTY TERN.

The Sooty Tern is a very rare visitor to the British Isles, inhabiting as it does the intertropical seas and coasts from the West

Indies to Australia. Only two or three occurrences are recorded in England; but a specimen was picked up dead at Marston, near Pembridge, after stormy weather, in May, 1885. It was unfortunately placed in the hands of a local bird-stuffer who, to make it fit a small case, carefully cropped the longest primary feathers of each wing.

[STERNA ANÆSTHETA—Scopoli's Sooty Tern.]
Once obtained at the mouth of the Thames.

GENUS—HYDROCHELIDON.
[HYDROCHELIDON HYBRIDA—Whiskered Tern.]
A rare straggler to Britain.

[HYDROCHELIDON LEUCOPTERA—White-winged Black Tern.
A rare straggler to England.

HYDROCHELIDON NIGRA—BLACK TERN.

Wild sea-birds that follow through the air.
MACKAY—*Song.*

This bird, storm-driven, occasionally visits the valley of the Wye. Mr. Lingwood records a specimen having been shot from the large pool at Mynde Park, Dewchurch, in 1859.

[Genus—ANOÜS.]
[ANOÜS STOLIDUS—Noddy.]
Two or three specimens recorded in Ireland.

[Genus—PAGOPHILA.]
[PAGOPHILA EBURNEA—Ivory Gull.]
An occasional straggler to the British Coasts.

Genus—RISSA.

RISSA TRIDACTYLA—Kittiwake.

Now a dark speck, but brightening as it flies.
A vagrant sea-fowl glads their eager eyes.
Montgomery—*Greenland.*

This bird has been seen on several occasions sailing about the broad valley of the Wye, when driven inland by stress of weather on the coast, though its slaughter has not been recorded for the county.

Genus—LARUS.

[Larus glaucus—Glaucous Gull.]
A winter visitant to the northern parts of Britain.

[Larus leucopterus—Iceland Gull.]
A rare winter visitor.

[Larus argentatus—Herring-Gull.]
Resident on our Coasts, and breeding in suitable localities.

LARUS FUSCUS—Lesser Black-backed Gull.

Through rising gale and breakers' foam
The shrieking sea-birds warned him home.
Byron—*Bride of Abydos.*

A pair of these birds have regularly visited the river Wye in April and May for the last three years. They have generally been seen in the valley between Rotherwas and Holme Lacy. They remain two or three weeks, and since they are not driven inland by bad weather, the inference is that they come to feed on the last-spring, or young salmon-fry which are so plentiful at that time.

LARUS CANUS—Common Gull.

White bird of the tempest ! O beautiful thing,
With thy bosom of snow and thy motionless wing,
Now sweeping the billows, now floating on high,
Now bathing thy plumes in the light of the sky ;
Now poising o'er ocean thy delicate form,
Now breasting the surge, with thy bosom so warm.
. . . . . .
Like a pure spirit, true to its virtue and faith,
'Mid the tempest of nature, of passion, and death.

Gerald Griffin.

The whole tribe of Gulls give a life and interest to the sea-coasts that is ever fresh and charming, and their graceful white forms reflected against a dark cloud, or the deep green back-ground of the water, add much grace and beauty to the scene. They are very expert on the wing, and fly with lightness and ease; they are equally at home on the land or on the water, and rise and fall on the waves with pleasurable freedom; whilst their cries, now loud and near, and now afar off, as the wind or distance affects them, give an additional interest to their presence. The poetical allusions to them are therefore numerous, although the poets may not always be naturalists.

Graceful Sea-gulls, plumed in snowy white,
Follow'd the creaming furrow of the prow
With easy pinion, pleasurably slow.

Mackay—*Legends of the Isle.*

And clouds of Sea-fowl high in ether sweep,
Or fall like stars through sunshine on the deep.

Montgomery—*Greenland.*

The grey host
Of wide-winged Sea-mews in their gyrous flight,
Oft intermingling, and repeating oft
Sounds, which the distant inexperienc'd ear,
Might deem the cry of eager hounds remote.

Hurdis—*The Favorite Village.*

The Sea-gulls hovering, milky-white,
Display their pinions to the light,
And dart and wheel with sudden cry,
Or drop like snowflakes from the sky.

Mackay—*Shoal of Whales.*

But beautiful and interesting as they are, they are yet but "scavengers of nature." They are the most voracious creatures, and practically omnivorous. They will eat anything they fall in with, from corn to carrion ; fish alive or dead, or any animal cast up by the tide.

On nimble wing, the Gull
Sweeps booming by, intent to cull
Voracious from the billow's breast,
Mark'd far away, his destined feast.
MANT.

They also take eggs, insects, worms, slugs, snails, grain of all kinds, and any vegetable matter. They prefer decaying animal matter, and thus aid the poet's bitter satire ;

The Eagle soars above! the Gull and Crow
Flock o'er the carrion, just as mortals do.
BYRON.

They are very interesting birds, too, when they associate for nesting purposes, in what have been termed "gulleries" ; but none of them have ever built, so far as it is known, in Herefordshire, and, indeed, they only visit the county during severe and stormy weather on the coasts.

The Common Gull may be seen most years in the valley of the Wye, and it has not unfrequently been shot. A good specimen was obtained at Staunton Park at Christmas, 1874. The bird was observed swimming on the ornamental water, and was shot by Mr. Dawson. Mr. King-King had it carefully preserved, and it is still in his possession. Another beautiful specimen was shot by Mr. Landon, at Lower Bullingham in 1883, which is now in the Hereford Museum. A pair of Gulls was also observed at Bredwardine on Easter Monday, 1884.

LARUS MARINUS—GREATER BLACK-BACKED GULL.

The broad-winged Sea-gull's never at rest ;
For when no more he spreads his feathers free,
His crest is dancing on the restless sea.
KEATES—*Epistle.*

This is a very magnificent bird ; it weighs about five lbs. ; is two feet six inches in length, and has a stretch of wing of not less than two feet nine inches. It has a slow powerful flight, now remaining almost motionless in the air, and again wheeling round in curves equally graceful and dignified.

The greater Black-backed Gull very rarely visits Herefordshire, but has been seen here on many occasions. A fine specimen was shot at Marcle, 1879, in the valley of the Lugg, near Sutton, and is now in the possession of Mr. Cheiake, of Hereford.

[LARUS ATRICILLA—Laughing Gull.]
A single specimen in the British Museum.

[LARUS ICHTHYAËTUS—Great Black-headed Gull.]
A single specimen in the Exeter Museum.

[LARUS MELANOCEPHALUS—Adriatic Gull.]
A single specimen in the British Museum.

LARUS RIDIBUNDUS—BLACK-HEADED GULL.

> The night-winds sigh, the breakers roar
> And shrieks the wild Sea-mew.
> BYRON—*Childe Harold.*

The Laughing Gull, Peewit Gull, or Black-headed Gull is one of the most interesting of its tribe. It is a very graceful lively bird; and is particularly remarkable for breeding in large colonies in the north of England, where the "gulleries" are protected with much care. It is but very rarely seen in Herefordshire—only one specimen is recorded as having been killed here, and that was brought to Mr. Newman, the bird-stuffer, in 1876.

[LARUS MINUTUS—Little Gull.]
An irregular visitor.

[LARUS PHILADELPHIA—Bonaparte's Gull.]
Said to have occurred in Ireland and Cornwall.

[Genus—Xema.]

[Xema sabinii—Sabine's Gull.]

A scarce autumnal straggler to the British coasts.

Genus—STERCORARIUS.

[Stercorarius catarrhactes—Common Skua.]

Breeds in the Shetland Isles, and in autumn and spring occurs along the British coasts.

STERCORARIUS POMATORHINUS—Pomatorhine Skua.

> And with wild wing
> The circling Sea-fowl cleave the flaky clouds.
>
> Thomson—*Winter.*

There is only one record of this bird having been seen in Herefordshire. A specimen was obtained by Mr. Preece, August 8th, 1882, on the Foxley estate, in the valley of the Wye. It had seized a young Pheasant, which it was devouring when disturbed. A trap was set, and baited with the remainder of the Pheasant, and the Skua returned to finish its meal, and was caught. It is now in the Hereford Museum.

STERCORARIUS CREPIDATUS—Richardson's Skua.

Mr. King-King gives an interesting notice of the occurrence of this rare bird at Staunton Park, in September, 1869. A party of gentlemen were out shooting, when, on crossing a field, they observed a strange bird following the plough, and apparently searching for food as the ground was turned up. Mr. King-King fired, and killed the bird, which proved to be a Richardson's Skua. It had probably been brought so far inland by the severe gales which had recently taken place. The bird was very carefully set up, and is still in the possession of Mr. William King-King.

[STERCORARIUS PARASITICUS—Buffon's Skua.]
An occasional visitant on migration.

ORDER—TUBINARES.

FAMILY—PROCELLARIIDÆ.

GENUS—PROCELLARIA.

PROCELLARIA PELAGICA—STORM-PETREL.

Up and down !—up and down !
From the base of the wave to the billow's crown,
And amidst the flashing and feathery foam,
The Stormy-Petrel finds a home.
BARRY CORNWALL.

Here ran the Stormy-Petrels on the waves,
As though they were the shadows of themselves
Reflected from a loftier flight through space.
MONTGOMERY—*The Pelican Island.*

This smallest of all the web-footed birds has a weird character, and a peculiar interest. From its power of half flying, half paddling along the surface of the rough sea-waves, it gets its name of "Petrel" from the Apostle Peter, who walked upon the water.

The blackening wave is edged with white;
To inch and rock the Sea-mews fly;
The fishers have heard the Water-Sprite
Whose screams forbode that wreck is nigh.
SCOTT—*The Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

It is supposed to be only seen before stormy weather, when its small size, its quick movements, and its sombre colouring, strike the mariners with awe, and they even call them "Devil's Birds," "Witches," or "Mother Carey's Chickens."

Modern sailors pay as much respect to auguries as Aristophanes tells us those of Greece did two thousand years ago:

"From birds in sailing men instruction take,
Now lie in port, now sail and profit make."

They have not, however, always the opportunity to heed the

warning given by the Petrels, and so abuse and dread the birds who give it.

O'er the deep !—o'er the deep !
Where the whale, and the shark, and the sword-fish sleep,
Out-flying the blast and the driving rain,
The Petrel telleth her tale in vain ;
For the mariner curseth the warning bird
Who bringeth the news of the storm unheard.
BARRY CORNWALL.

The only recorded instances of the occurrence of the Storm-Petrel in Herefordshire, are—at Shobdon, where one was shot after some very severe weather in the Channel, in December, 1867 ; and at Carthage, in the parish of Foy, near Ross, a Storm-Petrel flew against a window and was killed, in the year 1877. Local tradition also states that another was taken many years since at Hurstley Common, in the parish of Kinnersley.

PROCELLARIA LEUCORRHOA—LEACH'S PETREL.

Vel mare per medium fluctu suspensa tumenti
Ferret iter, celeres nec tingeret æquore plantas
VIRGIL.

She swept the seas, and as she skim'd along,
Her flying feet, imbath'd on billows hung.
DRYDEN—*Trans.*

The Fork-tailed Petrel is a very shy and rare bird. A specimen was picked up dead, at Dewsall, by the Rev. A. W. Horton, after the very severe snow-storm in the winter of 1879-80. It was presented by Mr. Horton to the Hereford Museum, where it can now be seen.

[Genus—OCEANITES.]

[OCEANITES OCEANICUS—Wilson's Petrel.]

[*Oceanites oceanica*—*Yarrell.*]

A rare visitor to the coasts of England.

Genus—PUFFINUS.

PUFFINUS ANGLORUM—Manx Shearwater.

The Manx Puffin, or Shearwater, has occasionally been met with in Herefordshire during the prevalence of severe weather on the coast,

"When floods are raging, and the gales blow high."

A specimen was taken at Peterstow, in September, 1867, from a turnip-field; and another was also killed at Woolhope, in 1883. On the 7th September, 1887, a Manx Shearwater was picked up alive, in a field near Gayton Hall, in the parish of Upton Bishop. It was very weak, but quite uninjured, and had probably been driven inland by the stormy weather prevalent at that time. It was taken to Mr. Elmes, who tried to save its life, but without success; he set it up carefully, and it is now in his possession.

[Puffinus griseus—Sooty Shearwater.]

Met with occasionally on the coasts of Great Britain.

[Puffinus major—Greater Shearwater.]

Occurs irregularly in autumn.

[Puffinus obscurus—Dusky Shearwater.]

Once in Ireland, once in Norfolk.

[Genus—Fulmarus.]

[Fulmarus glacialis—Fulmar.]

Breeds on some of the western islands of Scotland, but is a rare winter visitor to the British coasts.

[Genus—Œstrelata.]

[Œstrelata hæsitata—Capped Petrel.]

Once obtained in Norfolk.

[Genus—Bulweria.]

[Bulweria columbina—Bulwer's Petrel.]

Two stragglers obtained on the coasts of Yorkshire.

ORDER—PYGOPODES.

FAMILY—COLYMBIDÆ.

GENUS—COLYMBUS.

COLYMBUS GLACIALIS—GREAT NORTHERN DIVER.

This magnificent bird rarely visits the county, but there are some recorded instances of its coming, storm-driven. Mr. W. C. Blake, of Ross, says, "About the year, 1867, a female specimen was shot on the Wye, immediately opposite Ross, by Mr. John Poole. I had the pleasure of seeing it in 1883." The two specimens in the Hereford Museum were obtained—one from the river Wye, at Clifford, near Hay; the other, from Llangorse Lake, in the adjoining county of Brecon, but only five or six miles over the Herefordshire border.

[COLYMBUS ARCTICUS—Black-throated Diver.]

A somewhat rare straggler to the British coasts.

COLYMBUS SEPTENTRIONALIS—RED-THROATED DIVER.

The Red-throated Diver breeds in the Faroe Islands, Iceland, and Spitzbergen, and even north of the latter, Parry met with it as far as he went on his boat-voyage. It visits the coasts of the British Islands from autumn to spring, but it is not common in the inland counties. Its presence in Herefordshire has several times been recorded; a specimen was caught on the ice, in the river Wye, near Ross, in the winter of 1854—5; and two others were shot on the Weir Cliff stream, in the severe winter of 1879—80; all three birds are in the Hereford Museum. Mr. W. C. Blake, of Ross, states that "a Red-throated Diver was seen on March 5th, 1884, floating down the Wye on a mass of drift," and he also gives the following recent occurrence—"on November 17th, 1887, a Red-throated Diver was killed on the Wye, in the parish of Sellack.

It is a very fine bird, in the immature state of plumage which has obtained for it the name of the "Speckled Diver." Its length is twenty-six inches; expanse of wing, three feet six inches; and it weighs three pounds and three quarters." The bird is now in Mr. Blake's possession.

The Red-throated Diver is sometimes called the "Rain-goose," because its wailing cries are thought to foretell wet and stormy weather.

Family—PODICIPIDÆ.

Genus—PODICEPS.

PODICEPS CRISTATUS—Great Crested Grebe.

The Great Crested Grebe, or Loon, is a visitant all the year round, on Llangorse Lake, in Breconshire, some five or six miles beyond the boundary of Herefordshire. In 1852, one was shot on the Wye, near Ross, and is now in the Hereford Museum. Two fine specimens, male and female, were shot on the pond at Shobdon, in the spring of 1880, and are in the possession of Lord Bateman. A young immature specimen was also killed on the Wye at Wilton, in December, 1881, and is now in the possession of Mr. W. C. Blake, of Ross.

The nest of the Great Crested Grebe is composed of half-rotten decaying water-plants, and built among the reeds and rushes, nearly level with the surface of the water, and is generally very wet. The eggs, which are quite white when laid, become very much stained and discoloured in consequence. The parent birds are very careful of their young, and at the least alarm will dive down with them, placing them safely under their wings. They feed them with young eels, small crustacea, and a little vegetable food; they are also very fond of tadpoles and small frogs.

The Great Crested Grebe is a very handsome bird, and the beautiful silvery whiteness of the under surface of its body, has caused it to be sometimes called the "Satin Grebe."

[PODICEPS GRISEIGENA—Red-necked Grebe.]
A somewhat rare visitor to Britain.

PODICEPS AURITUS—SCLAVONIAN GREBE.

A specimen of this very rare bird is to be seen in the Hereford Museum, labeled, "Hereford, 1849," but no further particulars can be obtained about it.

PODICEPS NIGRICOLLIS—EARED GREBE.

The Black-necked, or Eared Grebe is the rarest of all the Grebes, but it has been met with once in Herefordshire. A specimen was shot on the Wye, near Stretton-Sugwas, in 1879, and is now to be seen in the Hereford Museum.

GENUS—TACHYBAPTES.

TACHYBAPTES FLUVIATILIS—LITTLE GREBE.

[*Podiceps fluviatilis—Yarrell.*]

> Upon this promise did he raise his chin,
> Like a Dive-dapper peering through a wave,
> Who being look'd on, ducks as quickly in.
> SHAKESPEARE—*Venus and Adonis.*

The Little Grebe, Dabchick, or Didapper, is not unfrequent on the ponds and streams throughout the county, though it is rarely seen except by those who look for it; it abounds on the ponds round Aymestry. It is the smallest of the Grebes, and naturally a very shy bird, but admits of being easily tamed. A pair of Little Grebes was kept alive for some years

in the window of one of the leading restaurants in Paris, and did not seem in the least to mind the admiration of the visitors, though the pond and fountain in which they sported was of glass, and the few ornamental plants did not hide them.

The food of the Dabchick consists of small fishes, and aquatic insects, with some vegetable substances; it will dive in the most rapid manner, and bring up minnows with surprising quickness to feed its young.

The Little Grebe builds a floating nest, hidden among the weeds and rushes, and keeps a most careful watch over it. The young when hatched, take quickly to the water, and dive naturally with the parent birds. They have the power of sinking their bodies beneath the water, only leaving their heads and tails exposed, so as to be nearly invisible; at any alarm, they instantly dive, and can swim for a considerable distance under water, giving their heads an amusing little shake when they regain the surface.

Their numbers seem to vary in different seasons, which is partly due to migration. They seldom fly, but they must be able to do so, for they are found on detached and isolated ponds, and in hard winters they have to leave their favourite ponds for the rapid rivers, and their mode of progression on land is proverbially difficult. Thus Pope uses it in illustration—

> As when the Dabchick waddles through the copse
> On feet and wings, and flies, and wades, and hops.
> —*Dunciad.*

FAMILY—ALCIDÆ.

[Genus—ALCA.]

[ALCA TORDA—Razor-bill.]

Breeds in suitable localities throughout the British Islands.

[ALCA IMPENNIS—Great Auk.]

Formerly occurred in British waters, but believed now to be extinct. The last recorded example in 1844.

[Genus—Lomvia.]

[Lomvia troile—Common Guillemot.]

[*Uria troile—Yarrell.*]

Breeds in suitable localities throughout the British Islands.

Lomvia bruennichi—Brünnich's Guillemot.]

A rare straggler to the coasts of Scotland.

[Genus—Uria.]

[Uria grylle—Black Guillemot.]

Visits England on its partial migration.

[Genus—Mergulus.]

[Mergulus alle—Little Auk.]

An irregular visitant to the British coasts.

Genus—FRATERCULA.

FRATERCULA ARCTICA—Puffin.

The Puffin, or Sea-Parrot has once been met with in Herefordshire. The specimen now in the Hereford Museum was knocked down by a carter, with his whip, in June 1876, on the road leading from Woolhope to Hereford. There is no other record of its appearance here.

The Puffin builds in many localities around the coasts of Great Britain, migrating southwards in winter. "The Scilly Islands have been famous for these birds from very early times," says Yarrell. William Botoner, or Buttoner, commonly called William of Worcester, in his "Itinerary" (c. 1468-78) speaks of the Island of Trescoe as inhabited, "cuniculis et avibus vocatis *pophyns*,"

(HARTING, *Introd.* p. xii. to RODD'S—*Birds of Cornwall*). Mr. Frederick Holme, also says—"The Scilly Isles were held in the fourteenth century, under the King as Earl of Cornwall, by Ranulph de Blancminster, for an annual payment of six shillings and eight-pence, or three hundred Puffins at Michaelmas; probably salted or dried birds, as fresh ones could not be procured at that time." Lundy Island, Priestholm, and Puffin Island off the coast of Anglesea, are also noted haunts of the Puffin.

Birds, small and great, of endless shapes and colours,
Here flew and perched, there swam and dived at pleasure;
* * * * *
Some sought their food among the finny shoals,
Swift darting from the clouds, emerging soon
With slender captives glittering in their beaks;
These in recesses of steep crags constructed
Their eyries inaccessible, and trained
Their hardy broods to forage in all weathers.
* * * * *
Millions of creatures such as these possessed those busy isles

MONTGOMERY—*The Pelican Island.*

APPENDIX.

Local names of Birds in Herefordshire.

Blackbird ...	... Merle, Ouzel
Black-headed Bunting	... Reed Sparrow, Water Sparrow
Bullfinch ...	... Bud, Budding Bird; Cock Hoop; Hoop, Hoof; Hope, Tope
Chaffinch	... Pink, Pinkin; Pyefinch; Pyerinch; Shelly; Twink; Wet-bird
Coot	... Bald Coot
Crossbill	... Shell-apple
Dipper	... Water Blackbird; Water Ouzel; White-throated Blackbird; Wizzel
Fieldfare	.. Blue Rump; Blue Tail; Felt; Feltyfare; Veldebird
Spotted Flycatcher ...	... Beam Bird
Goldfinch ...	... Gold Linnet; Seven-coloured Linnet; Thistle-finch

Young Goose	Gull, plur. Gullets
Gosling	Goosmachick
Little Grebe	Dabchick Didapper Divvy Duck
Greenfinch	Green Linnet
Heron	Crane Hern
Lapwing	Green Plover Peewit
Magpie	Madge Magot Pie
Martin	Swallow
Night-jar	Churn-owl Fern-owl Goat Sucker Night Churr
Owl	Jelly Hooter Oolat
Barn Owl...	Screech Owl White Owl
Tawny Owl	Brown Owl Wood Owl
Tree and Meadow Pipit ...	Titlark
Redbreast...	Robin
Redstart	Brantail, Kitty Brantail Branter Fire-brand Tail
Ring-Dove	Cushat Quist, Queest Wood-pigeon
Rook	Crow
Sandpiper	Summer Snipe

Sea-birds	... Gulls
Red-backed Shrike...	... Butcher-bird, Flusher
Sky Lark	... Ground Lark
Sparrow Hawk ...	... Blue Hawk
Hedge Sparrow ...	... Aizack, Blue Isaac, Dunnock
House Sparrow ...	... Spadger
Starling	... Black Steer, Sheep-Stare, Stare
Stonechat... ...	... Gorse Bird
Swift	... Devilin, Skeer, Skir-devil, Squeaker
Missel Thrush ...	... Holly Thrush, Holme Screech, Mistletoe Thrush, Storm Cock, Storm Screech
Song Thrush ...	... Mavis, Throstle
Blue Titmouse ...	... Bluecap, Tom Tit, Willow Biter
British Long-tailed Titmouse...	Bottle Tit, Canbottle, Mummiruffin, Mumruffin, Ragamuffin
Great Titmouse ...	... Blackcap, Oxeye
Wagtail	... Water Wagtail
Whinchat... ...	... Furze-chat, Haytick

Whitethroat ...	Haybird Nettle Creeper Titty Whitethroat
Willow Warbler ...	Nettle-bird Willow Wren Yellow Wren
Green Woodpecker...	Hickle Rain-bird Stock-heckle Storm-bird Yaffil Yuckle
Wren	Kitty Wren
Gold-crested Wren ...	Fire Crest Gold Crest
Wryneck	Cuckoo's Mate Snake Bird
Yellow Hammer ...	Ammer Writing Lark Yellow Bunting Yellowhomber

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